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# THE MONTH

JUNE 1955

**ST. PETER CLAVER**

KATHARINE CHORLEY

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A. C. F. BEALES

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# ST. PETER CLAVER

By

KATHARINE CHORLEY

WHEN I WAS A CHILD I was given a book about the saints called *In God's Garden*. The cover had a picture of St. Christopher with his staff and the tiny boy on his shoulder, and inside I read how St. Christopher, not having the gift of prayer, had dedicated himself to carrying travellers across a bridgeless stream, and how on one occasion he had carried a child whose weight in mid-stream suddenly grew intolerable. But the saint struggled across with his burden and on the far shore he learned that in his charity and courage he had given safe passage to God Himself. And I read how St. Martin of Tours divided his cloak with the beggar and later in a vision saw Christ wearing that identical half of the soldier's cloak. And I read further how St. Francis conversed with the birds and how St. Gregory the Great made a pun about certain English slave-boys which fixed them in my imagination along with those improbable children whose hands were always clean, who brushed their teeth voluntarily and who never answered back.

The result of all this was that for long enough my conception of sanctity was limited to sweetness of character and, in action, pity and kindness to those weaker than oneself. The saint in fact was a kind of holy Boy Scout, and the idea was somehow emphasised by the sentimental title of my book.

When I was asked to contribute "a Saint" to this series my mind ranged through those about whom I might like to try to write, yet all the time like a swinging compass needle it came back to rest pointing at St. Peter Claver. And the reason I found was quite simple, for I realised suddenly that a couple of pages about Peter Claver, read years ago in Sir Arnold Lunn's exchange of letters with C. E. M. Joad published as *Is Christianity True?*, had exploded once and for all the boy scout or Tennysonian idea of sanctity—riding about redressing human wrongs and wearing

the white flower of a blameless life. Yet oddly enough, on a surface view, this St. Peter Claver appeared as the very type of saint whose holiness is exemplified in acts of charity since thirty-eight years of his working life from 1616 onwards had been spent at Cartagena in ministering under appalling conditions to the negro victims of the African slave trade. How did it come about that in reading a few paragraphs about this particular saint I had come to perceive, dimly and yet imperatively, an altogether different, deeper and more complicated meaning in sanctity?

In her interesting and illuminating book *The Further Journey*, Mrs. Rosalind Murray has studied and contrasted the differences between the Catholic and the humanist scale of values. But there are some saints whose sanctity seems to operate in modes that are easily acceptable to the humanist. Their "heroic virtue" appears to coincide with values which he admires, values which are roughly the adult equivalent of the boy scout-Tennysonian ideal. Thus every Englishman, whatever his creed or lack of creed, acclaims St. Thomas More; because St. Thomas More belongs to the great company of men and women of every creed and loyalty and belief who have preferred to be killed rather than betray their loyalties or give the lie to their beliefs. Moreover, St. Thomas was a statesman, a family man, and lived as the head of a highly cultivated household and circle; his private asceticisms and austerities and the intensity of his devotional life do not impinge upon the casual observer. And he did not court martyrdom; he held on so long as he could consistently with his integrity and when the decision that meant martyrdom had to be faced he made it only after a severe spiritual struggle. A psycho-analyst seeking to explain the sufferings of the saints in terms of his science could never convict him of masochism. But if we consider, say, St. Ignatius of Antioch, who also was martyred for his Faith, things become more difficult. Something is more obviously added to what we may call natural heroism—the psycho-analyst excusably catches a scent upon the breeze. For when Trajan arrested St. Ignatius in Antioch and ordered that he should be taken in chains to Rome for exposure in the Colosseum, the saint wrote to the Roman Christians imploring them to do nothing to prevent his giving his life for Christ: "Encourage the wild beasts rather so that they may become my tomb and leave nothing of my body..." And when we come to the mode of sanctity of such saints as St.

Benedict Joseph Labre or St. Margaret Mary Alacoque things become very difficult indeed. The psycho-analyst is sure he has found his quarry and the humanist is completely baffled by a scale of values so wildly at variance with his own. Indeed, the Catholic may feel occasionally baffled too for, as Mrs. Murray has shown, humanist values are so much a part and in many cases so fine a part of our Western thinking and feeling that it is extremely difficult to stand aside and compare them detachedly.

In many ways St. Peter Claver was in this sense a difficult saint because, twisted inextricably into the pattern of his charity and love and of his private spiritual life, there are strands which seem on a humanist scale of values to be distortions or unhealthy exaggerations. And yet the sanctity belongs to the total pattern; we can alter nothing, discard nothing.

His life stands out in contrast against nineteenth and twentieth century cherished assumptions. He ministered as an individual to individuals, healing souls and bodies, giving himself utterly, and loving these slaves of his with a self-regardless love born of his consuming love of God. Yet he took the slave trade as he found it and it does not appear that he ever raised his voice against its iniquity as a system and certainly he is not to be found in the very small band of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors such as Cardinal Ximenes and Pope Leo X who believed, far ahead of the social ideas of their time, that slavery, at any rate the African slave trade, ought to be reformed or abolished altogether. His senior on the slave mission at Cartagena, Fr. de Sandoval, who wrote a book entitled *De Instauranda Ethiopicum Salute* for which he had collected from slave-traders and slaves a mass of factual and statistical information, may well have contributed far more than Claver towards educating opinion against slavery. He seems almost a modern figure, standing alongside Wilberforce and Clarkson. But the Church in her wisdom has raised Claver and not de Sandoval to her altars.

The slave ships came in to Cartagena and discharged a putrescent, half-dead swarm of black humanity—men, women and children who had been confined for two months in quarters where they scarcely had space to move, reeking with the accumulated filth of their voyage and with the stench of untended septic sores, bowel affections, all kinds of disease. De Sandoval's mission was to meet the slave ships and bring what comfort he could, physical,

mental and spiritual to the newly-landed slaves. It is recorded of Sandoval that "when he received notice of the arrival of a negro vessel he was covered instantly with a cold and death-like sweat at the recollection of what he had endured on the last occasion; nor did the experience and practice of years ever accustom him to it." But of Claver it is told that when news came of a slave ship sighted off Cartagena his face seemed to light up with a kind of radiant joy. This makes us uncomfortable. We can sympathise with de Sandoval's human shrinking and admire the iron will which enabled him to fulfil his duty of charity in spite of it, but Claver's "radiant joy" in face of the bitter suffering of other men disconcerts us. The bewildering challenge of sanctity to all the instincts and accepted values of humanism is involved.

Peter Claver was a Spaniard from Catalonia. He was born on a farm among the southern foothills of the Pyrenees at a small place called Verdu not far from Solsona. But though his parents were farming and relatively poor they came of ancient lineage and there was an uncle who held a rich canonry at Solsona. Peter's mother had in her own mind dedicated this son to the Church from his early boyhood. Without in the least tainting this intention with a smear of hypocrisy, she had no doubt as time went on introduced the rich canon into her imaginative schemes for Peter. Indeed, the canon had already offered to educate the boy, but Peter's father considered that he needed the rough and tumble fellowship of school life and sent him to the Jesuit school at Barcelona. Evidently, he was shy and diffident about himself. All his life he would hate publicity though often his actions and, as a young man, his intellectual gifts inevitably drew upon him the attention of others. His school career suggested that he had the makings of a fine scholar, and the parents might legitimately have expected that their son would find not only holiness but also, sponsored by his uncle, a distinguished future as a secular priest. They would follow his career with thankfulness and pride and he would be available to watch over them in their old age. If this was the pattern of their dreams for Peter it was rudely disturbed when he asked their permission to become a Jesuit novice. They gave their consent ungrudgingly, a proof surely of both their spiritual loyalty and understanding—a climate of faith which had environed Peter since babyhood and which must have had its influence in forming his own spirituality. The parents' picture of the future



was expunged for good when Peter was accepted as a missionary to the Indies and sailed for Cartagena in 1610. He was twenty-nine, and both he and they knew that he would never see them again.

The years before Peter embarked for America had been spent first in the Jesuit novitiate at Tarragona, then at Parma in Majorca where the Jesuit College of Montesione had recently been founded, finally at Barcelona where he studied and taught theology. At Montesione he had done his philosophy and in spite of his nervousness had come brilliantly through the ordeal of defending in a public debate the theses he had studied. But, more vital for his future development, he had met and come under the influence of Alphonso Rodriguez, the elderly gate-keeper at the College, a lay-brother whose *total* love for and trust in God expressed itself in ways of astonishing and naïve childlikeness.

It may be [Fr. Martindale has written], that old men of this type—I will not say the complete expression of the type, like Alphonso—are not so seldom to be met with in the ranks of lay brothers of religious Orders. Perhaps anyone who has lived in a larger house of some such Order—a house of studies, for example—will remember more than one of these gentle old men, full of profound spiritual insight expressing itself often in acts of the most pathetic childlikeness or downright childishness. And such encounters come, I would dare to say, with a sweetness singularly refreshing to a mind in danger of sophistication, for the moment, by too much metaphysic or jaded at any rate by intellectual drudgeries. *Non in dialectica*. . .

This was the man to whom Claver turned with a spontaneous sympathy for his personal spiritual formation.

There was in Peter himself a definite streak of this same childlikeness and it may well be that he first sought Alphonso's company as a relief from the intellectual tension of his philosophical studies. Certainly he was not an "intellectual." His brain was a good instrument which he could use to cope brilliantly with philosophy or theology, but there is nothing in his life to suggest that his heart or the deeper levels of his mind were committed in these studies. He completed his theological course in America and then was told to sit for the most exacting examination of the Society. Protesting, he asked: "Is so much theology necessary in order to be able to receive ordination and baptise a few poor negroes?" This was in 1615; the following year the standard



triennial report on his general progress was handed to the Jesuit Provincial. He was described as of "average intelligence, judgment below the average, little prudence and little experience." Reading of his life during his first five or six years in America it is easy to see how the hard-bitten Jesuits of the colony could have been tricked into thinking that his strange mixture of apparently incurable diffidence, childlikeness and intellectual achievement almost in spite of himself, betrayed a lack of common sense and other necessary qualities.

Old Alphonso and young Peter became intimate friends and the friendship was evidently considered good for Peter by his superiors since they even allotted a special time when he and Alphonso could meet and talk without interference. Alphonso had been a business man until he was forty when, his wife and children being all dead, he had entered the Society as a lay-brother. Despite his childlikeness he was a forceful character and also with his experience of the world behind him no doubt a shrewd judge of men. He discerned the latent quality in Peter, the steel that could be tempered, the great reservoir of his soul which was being slowly and steadily filled with spiritual strength and power. His own imagination had been fired by the Indies Mission and he determined that Peter should carry into action the zeal which he himself could only use in prayer and penance. "How many souls in America," he said, "might be sent to heaven by priests who are idle in Europe. The riches of those countries are prized, whilst the people are despised. Savage as these men may seem, they are diamonds, unpolished it is true, but whose beauty will repay the lapidary's skill. If the glory of God's house concerns you, go to the Indies. . . ." And he urged the young man to volunteer rather than wait until he might be sent under obedience by his superiors: "Beg, urge, entreat of them to send you; reiterated entreaties are not contrary to obedience when there is reason to believe that the superior demurs only to try our constancy." He was of course not thinking then in terms of a mission to the African slaves but rather to the native Indians.

Peter's imagination took fire in its turn from Alphonso's, and as soon as he was back at Barcelona after completing his philosophy, he petitioned to go to the Indies. His Provincial temporised and told him in the meantime to stick to his theology. Two years later, Peter urgently repeated his request, and now permission

was granted. Fr. Mexia, who was to lead the group of young missionaries, asked that he should be ordained before leaving Spain since bishops were rarely available in the Indies. A resurgent wave of his natural self-mistrust suddenly overmastered him and he begged—successfully—that his ordination might be put off. He landed at Cartagena with his priesthood still to come, and was sent on to the Jesuit College at Santa Fé. The College was unfinished and under-staffed—it was not until 1612 that a proper complement of professors arrived from Spain—and Claver's comrades were already priests for whom there was ample work in the town. So he was given the menial jobs of the community and for more than a year he rang the changes as porter, sacristan, sick-nurse and cook. He was so happy with these tasks that he asked his Superior to allow him to continue as a lay-brother for always. Pious biography ascribes this request to his incredible humility, but it will deepen our final estimate and admiration of Claver's character if we allow that here probably was another instance of his self-mistrust this time leading him into veritable escapism—an example of the kind of shrinking which long ago had determined his father to send him to school instead of to a private tutor. In the years to follow, for the sake of his life-work among the negroes, he would learn to distinguish humility from escapism and gloriously overcome this defect of temperament. Peter's Superior refused his request and entered him among the students of theology no doubt on the recommendation of a Father recently arrived from Barcelona who had known him in the old days as one of his ablest pupils. It was at the end of this course that he was judged worthy to be professed of the four vows though the actual profession only took place in 1622, put off perhaps by his own protestations that he could not sustain the honour. He had indeed written to the General in 1618 asking to remain without any degree of profession in the Company. Perhaps the reply gave him a final criterion by which to disentangle humility from self-mistrust: "It is good to be humble, but you should with indifference await the decision on your case by the Company; that way lies the will of God."

But already he was learning to shoulder the responsibilities for which he was destined. At Santa Fé the priesthood had again been proposed to him and he again asked for respite, but towards the end of 1615 he left Santa Fé for the Jesuit house in Cartagena and

in December of that year he was ordained sub-deacon, deacon two months later and finally priest in March 1616. The humility which was so marked a trait of his spiritual character could now grow to perfection untainted by any admixture of self-mistrust. There was the occasion of a learned discussion when Fr. Claver intervened with an opinion and was rudely brushed aside by a disputant who told him to keep quiet because he was the veriest ignoramus without even a knowledge of Latin. Those who knew his past flared up in his defence, but he implored them to say nothing: "What does it matter," he said to his friends, "whether one is taken for a learned man or a fool; it is of far more importance that one should be humble and obedient." There was the occasion when an influential Spanish lady came to Mass in a costume which Fr. Claver deemed indecent. His words to her were plain and to the point. The lady lost her temper and turned on him with raised voice. At the sound of the unseemly row the sacristan came running followed by the Rector of the College who immediately blamed Claver for creating a scene by his indiscretion and imprudence. Peter fell on his knees and implored his Superior to punish him as he deserved. He made no attempt to defend himself by explaining the position.

These two stories have been chosen out of many because they instance his humility outside the context of his special work. Inside one's work occasions may arise when it is a duty to defend oneself for the sake of the work. In the interests of his mission Claver showed that he could fearlessly contest the decisions of his Superiors, clearsightedly and without confusion with his personal humbleness. He had, for example, begun after a time to acquire slaves for himself, having found by experience that this was the only way in which he could have ready at hand a team of interpreters to deal efficiently with the shiploads of slaves as they came in. At first he had done the best he could with slaves lent to him by friends or hired for a few hours. Talk of Fr. Claver's slaves reached the ears of the Jesuit Provincial who not unnaturally took alarm at this curious acquisition of property by one of the Fathers. In July 1626, Claver referred the dispute to Rome and demanded a definite ruling from the General, Fr. Vitelleschi, the same who had reproved him for misdirected humility eight years before. Two years later the answer came:

I am edified by the holy zeal your Reverence has displayed in this

work for Our Lord and I ask you urgently to carry on your work with the same fervour and the same fine ardour; I trust that Our Lord Himself will reward you for it. I am informing the Fr. Provincial that your eight or nine black interpreters are not to be sold or bartered or otherwise taken from you since they are essential to the fulfilment of your mission.

Clearly, Claver must have put this case with confidence and ability and perhaps eight years previously the General had already recognised the intrinsic quality, not yet fully released and realised, of the man he was dealing with.

There was too the strange little incident at an execution. Part of the work he had made for himself was to visit and comfort in prison slaves who had been arrested for running away, for theft or other crimes. He would try privately to get malicious charges withdrawn and if there were the chance of successful defence in the courts he would persuade the best advocates in the town to defend his slaves without a fee. But where no defence was possible the punishment was death and Claver would then accompany the prisoner to the gibbet, having confessed him and won his trust, supporting him body and soul till the noose tightened. On one such occasion the rope broke and the condemned man dropped at Claver's feet. He comforted him once more, took him in his arms and then himself passed a new rope round the man's neck: "But this is irregular," cried a priest who was looking on at the scene. "He has taken part in an execution!" Claver was momentarily abashed. Then, collecting himself he said: "If I can save a soul at the price of an irregularity, so much the better. But no, such an action can't be irregular." The rope broke again, and once more Claver, knowing the peace that his tender hands would bring to the tortured man, fitted a third rope.

When Claver came to America he naturally supposed that his work would develop amongst the native Indians, and indeed during his first winter he went once or twice on mission into the interior. But after his ordination he was made assistant to de Sandoval, and when the latter was recalled to Lima at the end of 1616 he was left in sole charge of the mission to the slaves.

We can hardly begin to assess the spiritual quality of his work without a sustained and often painful effort of the imagination. In the first place, we have to reconstruct the conditions. Cartagena was a busy seaport and city run by rich Spaniards whose interests

would be allied with the exploiters of mines and plantations in the interior for which the bulk of the slaves were destined. The stringent and amazingly enlightened laws promulgated in Spain for the protection of native Indians from slavery and forced labour—a response largely to the protests and representations made by Las Casas and his supporters—had resulted in a shortage of labour, and this was the real genesis of the large-scale African slave trade. Slaves were imported to man the mines and plantations which could not be adequately worked by the protected native labour. It is a strange irony of history that this was the indirect result of Las Casas' defence of the Indians.

The traditional theory on which the African slave trade was justified argued that it was permissible for a man to be enslaved who had been captured in a just war or who had committed certain crimes in his own land. Theoretically, the African slaves were ex-prisoners of war or criminals sold to the slavers by their own princes. But given the dimensions of the trade, it is obvious that in practice no one on either side of the Atlantic enquired into the antecedents of the slaves—no one that is except such rare men as de Sandoval who had the vision to transcend the sociology of their time. Indeed, there is extant a fascinating correspondence between de Sandoval and a Portuguese Jesuit in Angola on this very point. The Jesuit's reply to de Sandoval's honest scruples is a masterpiece of casuistry in the cant sense of the term. Churchmen like him salved their consciences by pointing out that even if free men were sometimes caught in the slave net yet their souls would benefit as they would have a chance of becoming Christians on arrival in America. Others, traders, planters and mine managers doubtless salved theirs by pointing out the practical impossibility of investigation once the slaves had been shipped. In favour of the governments of the Spanish colonies it has to be said that the laws regulating the relations of masters and slaves after the latter were settled were far more humane than those, *e.g.*, of the English plantations in Jamaica. It is as well for Englishmen to remember this. The slaves were not regarded as chattels. They had defined rights to which they could appeal, at least theoretically if not always in practice, in a court of law. The sadist had to amuse himself in private. In Jamaica he had the free public run of the island. The worst practical features of the system were the enforced exile and the appalling months' long voyage across the Atlantic.



The conditions of the voyage scarcely altered throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and there is a particularly clear description of them in the testimony of an English captain of a slaver given at an enquiry at Liverpool in 1790, when a bill was before Parliament for a more humane regulation of the trade. According to this man, every slave whatever his size had only five feet six inches in length and sixteen inches in breadth to lie in. The floor below deck was covered with bodies stowed or packed according to this allowance. But between floor and deck there were often platforms or broad shelves in the mid-way which were covered with bodies also. The height from the floor to the ceiling seldom exceeded five feet eight inches, and in some cases it did not exceed four feet. The men were chained two and two together by their hands and feet and were chained also by means of ring-bolts which were fastened to the deck. They were confined in this manner at least all the time they remained upon the coast, which was from six weeks to six months as it might happen. Their allowance consisted of one pint of water a day to each person, and they were fed twice a day with yams and horse-beans. After meals they jumped up and down in their irons for exercise. This was so necessary for their health that they were whipped if they refused to do it. They were usually fifteen or sixteen hours below deck out of the twenty-four. In rainy weather they could not be brought up for two or three days together. The mortality, taking thirty-five voyages, was approximately six per cent, exclusive of those who died after landing. But one man had lost a third of his sailors on his last voyage and also a third of his slaves.

This account scarcely varies in essentials from that given by James Barbot, a supercargo who sailed to the Congo in a slaver in 1700. About the same date a Dutch captain of a slaver made a comparison between his own (relatively) hygienic and humane methods of stowing slaves with the filthy and cruel usage of the French, English and Portuguese. There are, too, lists extant of the mortality on various voyages and the causes to which death is attributed. It is obvious from the ostensible causes listed that in almost every case misery and the terrible conditions of the slave's quarters were the real cause.

The survivors were the wrecks of humanity to whom Peter Claver ministered, winning them back to trustfulness and a semblance of human dignity by unfailing patience and an out-

pouring—there is no other word—of charity and love. Charity and love are abstract words; Claver made them concrete when he appeared with his baskets of provisions and fruit—delicacies which he never touched himself. There is a story that once a brother offered him a bunch of grapes which he refused but seeing the brother's chagrin he accepted two or three single grapes. He was asked whether the flavour was not finer than that of the previous year and replied that really he could not know since he had not tasted a grape since he left Spain. He made charity and love concrete too when he went among the sick tending their frightful suppurating sores, lending his cloak to one regardless of the infection when he must take it again, kissing the wounds of another in order to prove the reality of his brotherhood with these abandoned children of God. But it is not to be thought that he lacked a certain decent natural repugnance. A rich ship-owner had a slave who was so disgustingly disfigured by ulcers that he had been left to die in a squalid hole where no one could see him. Claver was called and the Spaniard watched from a distance to see what would happen. Horrified, retching with sudden nausea, Claver flinched and drew back. Then, ashamed of what he regarded as an evil cowardice in himself, he fled away and flogged himself. Returning, he fell on his knees beside the dying man, leant close to him, consoled him, lingered beside him and passed his tongue over the septic sores. After nearly three and a half centuries, we cannot even read the last part of this story without a rising nausea, a feeling that the saint was violating a natural decency. We are up once more against the terrible challenge of sanctity, the ruthless flail of an all-consuming love of God which can scatter our easy values to the four winds. We can call the saint's action a pathological aberration, but the explanation is too glib. It does not dispose of the searching challenge. If we try to face the challenge we begin to realise that for Claver it was a vital immediate fact that this man was made in God's image. For him to shy away was equivalent to shrinking from God Himself—and he made the most extreme reparation he could. Perhaps more than anything else we have to realise the annihilating immediacy of the impact of God on a saint like Claver.

Claver's primary duty was of course the healing of souls. The slave ships were quarantined when they docked because of the frequent epidemics on board, but Claver had a special permit to



visit them. After his death, the Rector of the College at Cartagena, charged with initiating the process for his canonisation, took the deposition of a Don Francis de Cavellero, an ex-captain of slavers.

In 1628 [said this man], I was making port at Cartagena when a violent outbreak of small-pox swept my crew and the blacks I had on board. The situation was desperate and I asked for confessors to absolve the dying and if necessary baptise them. The stench which rises from below decks from a slave-ship is choking. I had perfume burnt in the hold where the slaves were crowded together. I received Fr. Claver and, apologising for the revolting task which awaited him, I took him below. From a distance I watched him on his knees beside the sick hearing their confessions; without a thought for the risk of infection he went from one to another with a smile on his lips, comforting them, embracing them, baptising the pagans, leaving them deeply moved by so much goodness. I confess that I had not expected this marvel of charity. Every time that I met him after that, I felt as it were annihilated in his presence, convinced that sanctity could be carried no further.

It may seem strange that a captain of slavers could combine his barbarous job with this just and sincere appreciation of sanctity; his testimony gains the more weight by the contrast. It may seem strange too that Claver himself appears to have met these men without indignation or reproof though his anger flared when he found his black converts misbehaving themselves in the town in ways he specially detested, drunkenness, blasphemy and the obscene dance orgies of Africa to which occasionally they reverted. But though he never apparently questioned the system or the morality of a career made by running it, yet he protected at his own peril individual blacks from exploitation. The girl slaves, for instance, were too easily at the mercy of young Spaniards made vicious by a life of lonely luxury. Claver would rescue them whenever he could and for protection marry them off to one of their fellow negroes. More than once the balked young men ambushed him in the street and attacked him with daggers ready to stab.

When the slaves disembarked, they were herded into sheds for a few days before being sold up-country or re-shipped to ports along the coast. This short waiting period was all that Claver had for his main work of evangelisation. But there was nothing hasty or slipshod in his procedure and never a hint of forced conversions. De Sandoval, scandalised by what he had heard of the mass baptisms on the Guinea coast when shiploads of bewildered

slaves were rushed wholesale into the Church without a word of instruction and without having signified their assent, had worked out a technique of instruction before he was recalled to Lima. No negro was baptised by him except willingly and after he had made it clear that he understood the rudiments of the Christian Faith—enough for his prayers and to direct his life by. Methodically, Claver developed de Sandoval's plan. Through his interpreters and using pictures and his crucifix he gave a simple forthright instruction on the *Credo* and then on the Commandments. He taught them simple prayers and invocations. He distributed rosaries made from a local berry. Only when he was satisfied that a negro understood the basic meaning of the Faith would he proceed to baptism. He concentrated on two themes; the loving fatherhood of God with the redeeming sufferings of Christ and their own sure welcome into the Christian brotherhood if they tried to live by its precepts. Pictures drove home his words. On the right side of the painting there would be groups of finely dressed smiling blacks, on the left naked pest-ridden bodies surrounded by snarling wild beasts. "Here," he would say, "you have those who have been faithful to the grace of their baptism, there you have those who have refused baptism or who have betrayed it. Thus you will be happy or miserable throughout eternity." A crude simplification of reward and punishment? Perhaps. But the talk on love and fatherhood had preceded it, and Claver knew the stops he must use in order to draw out the genuine spiritual capacity of his primitive hearers. Indeed, his own strain of simplicity, like a spontaneous child's drawing, naïve but essentially true, may have enabled him to get inside their minds where another, as fervent but more sophisticated, would have failed. Yet he must have been capable of sophisticated argument too, for one of his converts was an Anglican archdeacon! This man, a chaplain, was interned at Cartagena along with a batch of English raiders. Claver met him and they talked at length in Latin. Weeks later the archdeacon lay dying in hospital and sent for Claver to receive him into the Church. It is said that after their chaplain's conversion and death, six hundred of the English prisoners eventually asked for instruction and were received.

After a few days of instruction. Claver had to bid his blacks good-bye, but first those of whom he was most certain had heard Mass and received communion.

In the off-season when no slave ships could cross the Atlantic, Claver made long journeys into the hills of the interior to visit his slaves distributed now in the mines and the cotton and coffee plantations. Much had to be packed into these rapid visits; there would be marriages to solemnise, children to baptise, endless confessions to hear. And left for months to themselves, some of his converts would understandably have fallen back into the old pagan ways of their past, or they had got muddled and forgotten parts of his teaching. Patiently, he talked to them and instructed them over again and then, with the slaves crowding round him to wish him a desolated *au revoir*, he would courteously thank the master of the place for his hospitality and the time off he had allowed his slaves and move away on the next stage of his journey.

In 1650, after one of these journeys, perhaps a specially gruelling one for he was already an old man of seventy, he came back exhausted to Cartagena which was in the grip of a particularly savage outbreak of plague. At once he was off to tend the sick. But after thirty-five years during which he had passed unscathed through hotbeds of infection he caught the disease, evidence perhaps that his mission was fulfilled, so gravely that he was given the Last Sacraments. He recovered, but never again to find the full use of his limbs. A shaking in hands and legs prevented him from saying Mass. And now he was given a grimly ironic opportunity to practise that humility which already seemed perfect, to others if not to himself. Gonzalez, a lay-brother who had been with him throughout his missionary life and had watched over him with a complete devotion, on one occasion defending him with well-planted fists from a couple of thugs hired to beat him up by an amiable Spanish lady whom he had offended, was called away to help man the plague-decimated ranks of the Jesuits in the town. The saint was left to the care of a clumsy dirty and brutal negro who would not bother himself with the duties of a sick-room, forgot his meals, forgot to support him while he was dressing so that often he would fall and bruise himself. Gonzalez, indignant, wanted to report the negro. "Let it be, brother," was the reply. "I am used to Joachim now, he does not suit me too badly." "But, Fr. Claver, he is horribly lazy and so rough with you." "Oh, brother, my sins deserve worse than him."

And then, one day, Gonzalez brought him a book which had recently appeared. It was the Life of his old spiritual master,

Alphonso Rodriguez. Perhaps it was the one gift for himself that Claver had ever willingly received. He clasped it to his breast beaming with joy. "Tell me," said Gonzalez, "is it true that one day when you were talking of the Trinity, you both fell into an ecstasy?" "It is true of Brother Alphonso." Physical humility, moral humility, intellectual humility, spiritual humility—he had climbed each rung in the ladder, taught and tempered in the secrecy of his private devotional life.

Yet enough is known of it for our pondering. He made a point of keeping his nights undisturbed, but only so that he might sleep for some four hours and then spend the remainder of his privacy in prayer and the practise of physical austerities. He had learned almost to do without physical nourishment and rest. Since his student days at Santa Fé and for a short time immediately after at Tunja in the mountains, where he had been sent apparently to recuperate from some unspecified illness, he had never known the relief from living at tension which is the most precious part of leisure. But he refused to cut short his one opportunity for spiritual nourishment and recuperation. One of his rectors who was also his penitent used sometimes to burst into his cell at night. "I beg of you," he said, "to choose another priest or another time to make your confession. Leave me the night."

We know relatively little about his private prayer except that it was fertilised and ripened through his devotion to Our Lady as the Mother of Divine Love, a devotion which he had first learned from St. Alphonso Rodriguez whose book of prayers and precepts he carried with him all his life and treasured as his most precious possession. Without this living sweetening warmth in his spiritual life it is possible that his harsh penances could have bound instead of suppling the sinews of his soul. Indeed, his terrible flagellations—he used a tarred rope studded with nails—seem to make him fair game for our hypothetical psycho-analyst. But we can show that he used them with the whole of his conscious mind as training for his soul and to unite himself in love with the sufferings of Christ. And we can point to the results. Muscle-bound pietists or psycho-neurotics do not spend their lives like St. Peter Claver.

Claver lingered on for four years after his partial recovery from the plague. In the town they spoke of his illness: "It is a great misfortune, but at least he is alive, he is there, he is praying for us, he loves us and thinks about us." Many others besides Don Francis

Cavellero realised that they had a saint living amongst them and we have to imagine ourselves into the collective mind of that richly turbulent town to understand what such a realisation meant to those who had it. In 1654, however, Fr. de Farina arrived from Spain to take over the mission to the negroes. Claver was overjoyed. It was his soldier's discharge and he announced it quite casually to his friend and penitent Isabella d'Urbina: "Our Lord has been good enough to promise that I shall die on Our Lady's birthday."

His death-bed presented a strange scene. When the news got into the city, the locked gates of the College were stoven in by a tumultuous crowd of men, women and children who pushed their way up to his room and there knelt by his bedside praying, or shouldered and jostled for the few objects that they could take away and treasure as relics. Above his bed there was a portrait of Rodriguez. Someone, Gonzalez perhaps, defended it with his fists so that Claver might have to the last the picture of the man whom he had loved and revered more than any other human being. An unedifying scene by our reserved standards and yet a spontaneous and genuine witness of the place he had won in the heart of the scarcely tamed city, of the place he would win more than two hundred years later in the heart of the Universal Church.

It is the unconscious function of a saint like Peter Claver to force us out of our snug accustomed humanist values, in order that we may at least try, humbly and candidly, to understand his naked spiritual values.



# EDUCATION UNDER MARY TUDOR

By

A. C. F. BEALES

## I

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY of the Tudors, as of the Stuarts after them, was quite clearly determined by their religious policy.<sup>1</sup> As soon as Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy was on the Statute Book in 1534, the declared need for religious uniformity in troublous times implied that there must be no freedom of thought on religion; and this in turn postulated that there should be no freedom of instruction in the schools. In an age of deep religiosity such a policy was of course bound to fail. Its extreme sanction—trial and execution for treason—found hundreds of staunch believers ready to defy the law in the name of a higher sanction still. Henry VIII, the Edwardian Protectors, Mary, and Elizabeth in turn provoked spiritual "resistance movements" whose adherents were content at first to wait, then to creep into clandestine schools and into the Universities through every crevice they could find in the prevailing Penal Laws, then to go underground or emigrate as the laws were strengthened against them, and ready all the time to suffer fines and imprisonment and even death with a constancy that has earned tributes from all the historians. It was an educational policy essentially negative, based on Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity which laid down effectually what the citizens must not do.

Mary's part in this was a reaction against a course already set. If one looks backwards in time from the Elizabethan Settlement of 1558-9, the death of Henry VIII is the true starting-point. Not so much because the Chantries Act of 1547-8 closed so many schools as to amount to an educational "blackout" and necessitate

<sup>1</sup> For the Stuart period see my articles in *THE MONTH*: April 1952 (James I), July 1953 (Charles I), August 1951 (James II).

a new start, as because the policy of State control of education enshrined in the Elizabethan Acts had its beginnings in the short reign of Edward VI, and because the theological reaction under Mary was not constitutional but a change of direction only. Under Henry VIII the test of orthodoxy had been the Oath of Supremacy. It was an immense impartiality that sent to Smithfield, on 30 July 1540, three hurdles bearing two martyrs each, one Catholic and one Lutheran.<sup>1</sup> Under the two Protectors, Somerset and Northumberland, the Crown became a Protestant and heretical Crown, and a Catholic education was accordingly outlawed on grounds both religious and constitutional. The roots of the Marian educational legislation lie to that extent in the minority of Edward VI.

Theologically, the Protectorate of Northumberland marks the first attempt at a policy of religious uniformity in education at all levels throughout the entire country. In the schools, this centred on the Catechism, authorised for use in 1553 along with the Forty-Two Articles of Religion. In the Universities, we have at the same time a landmark of equal significance, in the sending of commissioners in June 1553 to impose the Articles on all proceeding to degrees, thereby establishing a doctrinal religious test in academic life. It has been said of this episode that "of its expediency and justice as a principle the best illustration is afforded by the fact that when, under Mary, the opposite party regained the ascendancy they took example . . . by the illiberality of their antagonists and imposed a like subscription in favour of Catholic doctrine."<sup>2</sup>

## II

When Mary Tudor rode in state through London on 5 August 1553, a fortnight after her accession, an address of welcome was delivered by a London schoolboy, who had won the honour in open competition: Edmund Campion, of Christ's Hospital, then recently founded in Newgate Street. By the time Cardinal Pole arrived from Rome as Papal Legate fifteen months later, it was clear that the re-Catholicising policy of the new Queen was bent on utilising the whole of the educational system.

<sup>1</sup> J. Gillow, *Bibl. Dict. Engl. Catholics* (London, 1886), ii. 254.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Mullinger, *Hist. Univ., Cambridge*, ii. 145-6.



The religious Orders exiled under Edward VI began to return immediately: the Franciscan Observants to Greenwich, the Dominicans under Fr. William Perin to Smithfield.<sup>1</sup> Individual teachers returned in their wake, beginning with the Rev. Sir John Madde (or Mudd), who had been exiled under Henry VIII and now came home to teach "gentlemen's children and others" in Yorkshire.<sup>2</sup>

The actual increase of schools during Mary's five years seems to have comprised one Grammar School each year established by the Queen "of her own bounty," and some fifteen in all by private individuals.<sup>3</sup> Clitheroe (1554) and Repton (1557) were new foundations, the latter by Sir John Port. Derby (1554), Banbury (1555) and Basingstoke (1557) were re-foundations. The last of these is particularly significant, since not only was the Holy Ghost School re-established at Basingstoke but its Gild was restored as well: evidence of the Queen's attempt to effect "a restoration of the confiscated property of monasteries and chantries to pious uses."<sup>4</sup> As early as October 1553, indeed, the Commons were already discussing a Bill for giving lands to Grammar Schools among other deserving causes, and it was passed by 27 November.<sup>5</sup> Before the end of the same year, steps had begun too for securing the Catholic orthodoxy of what went on inside the schools.

On a petition from the Lower House of Convocation the Queen issued an instruction to "examine all schoolmasters and teachers of children and, finding them suspect in any ways, to remove them and place Catholic men in their room." A "Bill against seditious priests or teachers to be schoolmasters" was introduced into the Commons in the following year (6 December) by one Draycote.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They were expelled again in June-July 1559. The others were: Bridgettines (Catherine Palmer), at Syon Abbey 1554-9; Carthusians (Dom Maurice Chauncey), at Sheen 1555-9; Benedictines (Abbot Feckenham), at Westminster Abbey; Carmelites, recalled from exile in Scotland; Dominican nuns, at Langley, Herts. See P. Guilday, *English Catholic Refugees on the Continent* (London, 1914), i. 215, 285, 401, 57, 43, 347.

<sup>2</sup> H. Foley, *Records of the English Province S.J.* (London, 1875 f.), iii. 239.

<sup>3</sup> *School Inquiry Commission Report*, London, 1864, Appdx. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Victoria County Hist.*, Lancs., ii. 605; Derby, ii. 231, 216; Hants, ii. 372 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Commons Journals*, i. 29, 31.

<sup>6</sup> Cardwell, *Documentary Annals* (London, 1839), i. 112, also cited in N. Wood, *The Reformation and English Education* (London, 1931), 54-5; Strype's *Cranmer* says (i. 467 f.) that the order went to all the Bishops. Cf. also *Commons Journals*, i. 39.

It is impossible yet to assess the proportion of Protestant schoolmasters dismissed during the reign, since the matter has never been systematically investigated. But the trend may be gathered perhaps from the fact that, when the Queen was married to Philip II of Spain in Winchester Cathedral in 1554, only one of the group of Wykehamist boys who wrote congratulatory verses saw fit to mention religion.<sup>1</sup> The very few documented cases of ejected schoolmasters do include three leading schools. John Fenn, of New College, was appointed to the mastership of Bury St. Edmunds Free Grammar School in 1553; at Shrewsbury in 1556 the bailiffs were searching to find "an honest and able person to serve the office of Head Schoolmaster of the Free School," in place of John Eyton who had been there since 1551; and in the following year Preston Grammar School was put under Peter Carter, of St. John's College, Cambridge, who had just completed his M.A. degree.<sup>2</sup>

At Reading School the headmaster, Joceline Palmer, became one of the Protestant martyrs. He had gone from his Coventry home to be educated at Magdalen, and had secured his post at Reading School through Sir Francis Knollys. He was forced to resign in 1555, on account of a paper he wrote attacking the Privy Council for burning Bishop Hooper. In July he himself was burnt. The master who had been his predecessor, Thomas Thackham, returned to the school and ruled it till 1560.<sup>3</sup>

But it certainly does not do to assume, with A. F. Leach, that masters and ushers who left, and those who replaced them during Mary's five years, were Protestants and Catholics respectively. Statements such as that "Reve or Ryve seems to have fled the Roman persecution under Mary: at all events he was succeeded [at Berkhamsted School] in 1555 by William Barker . . ." are not scholarly. Nor does it follow, without evidence, that the reason why no master could be got to stay at the Crypt Grammar School at Gloucester was that the neighbourhood was unfavourable to the new religious régime.<sup>4</sup>

Some schools lapsed through a device new to Tudor con-

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Leach, *Hist. of Winchester College* (London, 1899), 282.

<sup>2</sup> For John Fenn, see Gillow, ii. 244-5; Cath. Record Soc., xxvi. 9; Guilday, 380; Bridgewater, *Concertatio* (1583); and *D.N.B.* For the others: G. W. Fisher, *Annals of Shrewsbury School* (London, 1899), 4; Gillow, i. 412-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Vict. County Hist.*, Berks., 251-2.

<sup>4</sup> A. F. Leach, in *V.C.H.*, Hants, ii. 75; *Glos.*, ii. 346.

stitutional practice. Since 1548 it had been usual for schools "reprieved" under the Chantries Act inquiries to receive their funds through the Court of Augmentations. This Court was now abolished, in the first year of Philip and Mary (1554). Some of the schools concerned were able to continue, by reason of other endowments: for example Cirencester, Newland, Cheltenham, Whalley. But some were not.<sup>1</sup>

### III

We are on clearer ground as regards the two Universities. There was no immediate Visitation, but both Universities were notified in the summer of 1553 that all the constitutional changes made since the death of Henry VIII in 1547 were void. In August, the Duke of Norfolk and Stephen Gardiner, lately in the Tower, were reinstated as High Steward and as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge—offices which Northumberland, in depriving them, had himself assumed. A change of heads took place in every Cambridge College except three (Gonville, Jesus and Magdalene); and those ejected included Matthew Parker, Nicholas Ridley and Sir John Cheke.<sup>2</sup>

Religious tests, for proceeding to a degree, followed in 1555. Articles were drawn up asserting the truths of the Catholic Faith and the Papal Supremacy, and condemning the teachings of Luther, Zwingli and Martin Bucer. Next year, Cardinal Pole, now Chancellor of both Universities, carried out Visitations in the course of which he revised the statutes, purged the libraries, and received the thanks of Convocation.<sup>3</sup>

As shown in his opening speech to his Provincial Synod, Pole was appalled at the ignorance of the clergy, as a concomitant cause of the Reformation and as a "natural breeding-ground of heresy." But it is not surprising that his reforms bore so little fruit; they had so little time—only three years; and Elizabeth and her Archbishop Matthew Parker were to find the same problem of clerical ignorance beyond even the whole decades that they were able to devote to it.<sup>4</sup> The reform of the Univer-

<sup>1</sup> *V.C.H., Glos.*, ii. 390, 416, 424; *Lancs.*, ii. 604.

<sup>2</sup> The appointments are listed in Mullinger, *Hist. Univ. Cambr.*, ii. 149 and note.

<sup>3</sup> The list of Visitors is in N. Wood, 109 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. Schenck, *Reginald Pole* (London, 1950), 143, 147. The whole field of clerical education prior to the Tridentine decrees is virtually unworked.

sities was Pole's first campaign, of three. It could touch but a few of the total clergy in the country but it was an interim step, pending the foundation of seminaries on the model of the Council of Trent, which would take time.

The second reform lay in the sphere of public preaching. One of the first statutes of the reign gave the Universities the right to license preachers. The Queen later reserved to herself the sole authority for issuing written licences, till on Pole's arrival the channel became a Bishop's licence. Bonner in London recognised only those issued by the Primate or himself. By the same token, foreign booksellers were expelled the country in 1553 unless "denizen or merchant known," and the Queen forbade any printing not licensed by herself. A list of forbidden books issued in June 1555 included the Edwardian Prayerbooks and all the works of the Reformers. Before Mary's death, the repressive measures enacted on the score of books had reached the extent of a proclamation in 1558 threatening the death penalty for anyone found in possession of any of the prohibited works.<sup>1</sup>

This infiltration of books is but one aspect of the spread of Protestant doctrines westwards from those centres in the south-east which traded with Germany and Flanders. Of the 273 Marian martyrs, six out of every seven came from those counties: and this *not* because they were the areas of densest population, since in that case the Catholic martyrs under Elizabeth later would have been greatest there also—whereas actually the country south of a line from Shrewsbury to the Wash furnished only 39 per cent of the Elizabethan recusants but 97 per cent of the Protestant victims under Mary.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the deprivation of clergy in these eastern regions impregnated with Protestantism seems to have been a matter less of religion than of clerical discipline. The returns from Essex, for example, showed no cases of "political or religious recusancy," but an overwhelming majority for marriage and

William Allen's strictures on it in 1577, after the foundation of the English College at Douay, are in T. F. Knox, *Letters and Memorials* . . . (London, 1882), p. 32. The problems have been posed, with some challenging evidence, in Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England: the King's Proceedings* (London, 1950), 50-1, 83-5, 104-5; and also in his second volume (1953), 82-3, 92, 138.

<sup>1</sup> Mary's order is in Cardwell, i. 105; Pole's also, i. 151; Bonner's is in Frere, ii. 364. Mary's order on printing is in Strype, *Cranmer*, iii. 50-1.

<sup>2</sup> See the study by H. E. Malden, in *Royal Hist. Soc. Transactions*, N.S. ii. (1885).

non-residence. Of the ninety-three priests ejected in Essex in 1553, twenty-eight were re-appointed in the following year; and of the thirty not reinstated at all who can be traced as late as the end of the reign, only eight were patently antipathetic to the religious policy of the Marian Government.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the Visitation Articles of the reign bearing directly on education, though numerous, covered by no means all the country. They comprise those of the Queen and Bonner and Gardiner in 1554, Pole's *Constitutions* of 1556, and the Canterbury and St. Asaph Visitations by Pole and by Goldwell in 1556 onwards.<sup>2</sup> Bonner's Visitation Articles for London are representative of all the rest. The eighth article dealt with schools and schoolmasters. It laid emphasis on the need to purge out unsound teachers, and to sustain the *Latin Grammar* of Lyly which Henry VIII had enjoined on all Grammar Schools in 1540.<sup>3</sup> But the fullest, and the most important of these documents historically are Pole's *Constitutions*: his third scheme of reform.

#### IV

The Cardinal had landed in England in November 1554. At the end of the same month he received the country back into the Catholic Church, in the presence of Philip and Mary; and next year his Provincial Synod, deliberating in Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey, produced the twelve decrees of the *Constitutiones Legatinae*, promulgated in February 1556.

The eleventh decree, *pro Reformatione Angliae*, is the one that concerns us here. One part of it dealt with the Universities, setting up Nicholas Ormanetti as Visitor, and giving a priority to the restoration of the Divinity Schools at Oxford. Another part ordered that all schoolmasters should be examined and approved by the Bishops, with a (three years') ban on teaching

<sup>1</sup> See Hilda E. P. Gieves, in *Royal Hist. Soc. Transactions*, 4th S. xxii. (1940).

<sup>2</sup> Bonner's text is in Frere, ii. 331-59; Pole's *Constitutions* are in Wilkins, *Concilia*, iv. 126, and in Cardwell, i. 160 f.; Goldwell's, in Wilkins, iv. 145. Pole's Canterbury Visitations, carried out by Nicholas Harpsfield (arts. in Frere, ii. 425), are vols. 45 and 46 of Catholic Record Society (1950-1), ed. L. E. Whatmore. Gardiner's Visitation (Cardwell, ii. 322) is omitted by N. Wood's list (Wood, 44).

<sup>3</sup> There were individual exemptions in all this, as again under Elizabeth later. Gardiner gave special favour to Nicholas Udal, who had been "his schoolmaster"—see J. A. Muller, *Stephen Gardiner* (London, 1926), 280, 387.



as penalty for default. But the most important sections are those on the schools and on clerical education.

For the future, the clergy were to be trained (as of old) in the Cathedral Schools—one school for each diocese. The boys were to be received at the age of eleven or twelve, a preference being given to poor boys. Their prior education must amount at least to the ability to read and write. They were to take the tonsure, wear the habit, and live in community under the superintendence of the Dean and Chapter. The books for their study must have the approval of the Bishop. In sum, the article calls these schools a "kind of seminary."<sup>1</sup>

In so far as this practice was already in vogue at Canterbury and elsewhere, the enactment was not an innovation. In so far, on the other hand, as direct evidence has never yet been adduced, the influence of this *Decretum XI* on what was afterwards done at the Council of Trent cannot be measured.<sup>2</sup> The presence of Reginald Pole at the Council, however, and the remarkable similarity between his own decree and those of 1563, make it impossible to deny a connection. If the presumption remains a presumption, it is nevertheless a considerable one.<sup>3</sup>

Equally important, the scope of the schools envisaged by the Legate must not be conceived too narrowly. It has been said<sup>4</sup> that they were but seminaries for the priesthood, and that this perhaps explains the reference to "children" priests in the Elizabethan Injunctions of 1559. But, first of all, there is nothing to preclude the assumption that the "other boys" mentioned in these decrees of Pole were *lay* boys, receiving their education in these "seminaries" for reasons of geographical or other convenience, and not "automatically" destined for the priesthood unless "for any reason they are wanted" (*qui quocunque desiderabuntur*). Indeed (in the second place) that was to be precisely the actual situation at the first schools for English Catholic boys in exile, when Fr. Robert Persons, S.J., established them, at Eu, and at St. Omer,

<sup>1</sup> The Latin text of *Decretum XI* has been reprinted from Wilkins, iv. 135, in N. Wood, 42 note. It is summarized in A. T. Drane, *Christian Schools and Scholars* (London, 1867), i. 433 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The claim is asserted by Drane, ii. 434, and by J. G. Sneyd-Cox, *Life of Cardinal Vaughan* (London, 1912), ii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> The Tridentine texts are in the *Acta*, ed. Stephen Ehses (Herder, 1914); also J. Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees . . . of Trent* (London, 1848 and 1881).

<sup>4</sup> N. Wood, *Reformation and English Education*, 41.



in the Low Countries, in 1582 and 1593. The preliminary training *together* of scholastics and lay boys runs right through the history of English Catholic education during penal times, and even after the return home of the colleges at the onset of the French Revolution (cf. the history of St. Edmund's College, and of Ushaw, in the nineteenth century). Only positive reasons, then, should warrant our declining to discern this same principle between the lines of Pole's original decree.

Wherefore, on this count as well as the inherent probability that they served as a model for the Decrees of Trent, and thus as a model for the whole of Catholic ecclesiastical education since, these *Constitutions* must rank as the most far-reaching educational achievement of the Marian Counter-Reformation.

But in one direction no less historic—the advent of the Jesuit educational contribution—the Cardinal made very much less progress. Ignatius Loyola, rejoicing at the return of England to the bosom of the Church, began as early as 1554 to receive “young Englishmen in our Germanic College [in Flanders].” In January 1555 he opened a correspondence with Pole, asking for recruits. Not much was done towards securing a stream of English Jesuit postulants; the catalogue of English Jesuits (apart from Thomas Lith, received into the Society of Jesus in Rome by Loyola himself in June 1555) does not begin till 1561. But negotiations went on also for an English College in Rome to train secular clergy: a project ultimately brought to fruition when the *Venerabile* was established in 1579.<sup>1</sup>

## V

Nothing more symbolises the finality of the Marian reaction, perhaps, than the fact that the Queen and the Cardinal died on the very same day, 17 November 1558. If we can say, with an English Jesuit historian,<sup>2</sup> that the five years of the reign were too short for their results to be assessable, we can nevertheless see in those few years the emergence of an educational policy. One authority on the subject has indeed denied that there was a policy, and has countered that there was no restoration of any equivalent of the lost Chantry Schools (which is true) nor anything in Pole's

<sup>1</sup> For all this, see the *Cartas* of Loyola, vol. iv.; the *Letters* of Pole, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Pollen, *Eng. Caths. in the Reign of Elizabeth* (London, 1920), 35.

eleventh decree beyond the old Cathedral Schools.<sup>1</sup> But just as Mary's omission to restore the monastic properties does not lessen the reality of her religious aims, so the paucity of new schools is no valid argument, by itself, as to her intentions in education.

The record is mixed. What integrates it is the royal determination—which she shares with her father before her and with her sister afterwards—to proclaim the norms of orthodoxy and to enforce them. That was the Tudor character. The screw was turned most tightly where the resistance was heaviest: in Mary's reign not in the Universities nor in the schools, but upon the printers and distributors of banned Protestant literature. To deny that the Queen and the Cardinal wished for the banishment of all schoolmasters who favoured the reformed doctrines would be idle. But no assertion that they achieved anything like this, in those five years, could call attested evidence in support. On the contrary, the fact that there were so few expulsions of Catholic schoolmasters in the first few years of Elizabeth's reign indicates that their arrival or restoration under Mary had evidently not been wholesale.

But, in the last resort, the ding-dong of persecution setting in since 1534 was bound to deepen those spiritual foundations, on both sides of the war of attrition, on which all contemporaries were agreed that education must depend. In 1558-9 the pendulum swung sharply. By 1563 Catholic education was not only totally proscribed but the Oaths enforced on schoolmasters would serve, it was hoped, as an automatic cue for sanctions. Says the historian of the English people: "What Protestantism had first done under Mary, Catholicism was doing under Elizabeth. It was deepening the sense of personal religion. It was revealing in men who had cowered before the might of kingship a power greater than the might of kings."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> N. Wood, 40 note.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. Green, *Short History*, 1895 ed., p. 410.

# THE WRITINGS OF SIR MAX BEERBOHM

By

DEREK STANFORD

TO ALL WRITING OF REAL EXCELLENCE—unless its place is with the highest of the high—fashion behaves capriciously. It suffers its “ups-and-downs” of approbation, neither of which strictly correspond with the verdict of a detached judgment. Perhaps the present reception of Sir Max Beerbohm’s work shows the working of such a visitation.

On the one hand, we have a number of his titles published recently by Penguin Books,<sup>1</sup> with others scheduled for the same popular fame; while on the other, his position is assessed by a leading younger critic in no too friendly terms. “The best discursive prose,” writes Mr. G. S. Fraser in *The Modern Writer and His World*, “within its frail and tiny limits, of the later 1890s and the Edwardian decade is Sir Max Beerbohm’s, and Sir Max is a writer who is all ‘manner,’ and nothing but manner; his style like his personality is artificial, a conscious construction. . . .”

We are probably due, as Mr. T. S. Eliot suggests, for a period of “lower-middle-class culture”; and it is therefore natural that the serious critic should quiz rather strongly what the majority approves. But in this case the irony is double. That Sir Max—once the mascot of a literary *élite*—should reach the paper-bound-reading-public is cause enough for reflection, surely; but that, by so doing, he should bring upon his work the doubts of a younger *cognoscenti*, is twice to pay the toll-charge of time.

Because of this—because his writing stands so well to the front in the ranks of common favour, gaining, at the same time, reserved assent only in certain quarters more “advanced”—there exists a need to look below its surface (which Mr. G. S. Fraser takes to be the whole) of this author’s style and perspective. And when we do this, I think we descry the delicate outlines of a

<sup>1</sup> *Poets’ Corner*, *Zuleika Dobson*, *Seven Men*, and two others.

meaning and purpose, lightly but brilliantly disguised beneath a show of mannerism and wit.

We do not ordinarily consider Sir Max Beerbohm as being a critical author. Apart from the collection of dramatic notices, contained in the volume *Around Theatres*,<sup>1</sup> his work is not critical in substance. Neither is it critical in tone, if by such be understood the voice of reasoned argumentation. Yet if the term is extended to imply the play of discernment and selection, at least three headings propose themselves under which to sound Sir Max's merits as a critic: first, as a judge and scrutinist of his own process of composition; secondly, as an informal commentator on things in general, as one man sees them; and thirdly, as a parodist, remarking on the obverse face of rated talent.

## I

In his engaging study of Newman, Mr. Robert Sencourt employs the following illuminative phrase. Speaking of the words of the preacher at St. Mary's, he observes that "they had in them the surprise of that excellence which makes words literature." "The surprise of that excellence" serves well to describe the impact which Sir Max's style has upon us, administering its novel, small, unflagging shocks.

"For my own part," he tells us, "I am . . . a *petit maître*"; and it is this certainty of, this confidence in, his own capacity that has enabled Sir Max to adjudge his proper effects and keep them all to scale. The works of this author are not largely planned; the broader attractions and harmonies and structures of more developed forms are beyond their scope. Because of this—their limited area—the appeals of that "surprise of . . . excellence" must be the more numerous, the more constantly at hand. So it transpires that our main response to this unsleeping prose is a tingling awareness, a pleasurable alarmed apprehension, awaiting the next trill or tinkle of the bell.

One needs only turn to the first page of the author's first book, *Works* (1896), to locate the presence of this alerted language. The essayist is speaking of the drawings of Greco, a fashionable Regency artist; listen: ". . . the unbridled decorum of Mlle.

<sup>1</sup> First published in 1924.

Hullin and the decorous debauchery of Prince Esterhazy in the distance make altogether a quite enchanting picture." Now if the essence of criticism lies in the selection and dissociation of terms and ideas, then these words were written by a critic: "unbridled decorum" and "decorous debauchery" are critical conjunctions of a high order—they are not commonly found keeping company together.

All good writers hold the *cliché* suspect. Most are content to avoid its path; but Sir Max takes sport in tracking it down, and standing it, topsy-turvy, on its head—almost. Almost, I say—for the act of inversion which makes for paradox is not quite completed. Instead, the platitude finds itself deposited, upside-down, but a little awry. A commonplace in thought and expression has been challenged; but the juggler's gesture which makes the paradox as frequently as untrustworthy as the truism is not carried through to its automatic end. It stops short a little, this side of contradiction. Thus, Sir Max will blithely insist that "old friends are generally the refuge of the unsociable," or that "the thought of a voluptuary in pain is very terrible." At first the deft reversal of opinion delights us; next, we demur at its pert audacity; and finally concede to it a sort of half-assent. Acclaimed by Shaw as "the incomparable Max," the essayist informs us that it was Oxford which rendered him "insufferable." "The attitude he has all along adopted is that of 'the *insufferable* Max,'" writes Muriel Spark in an article on him; and part of this "insufferability" is the gay measure of shrewd truth within it. Conceived always with "the sentiment of style," and cast in "the very deuce of a pose," Sir Max's writings constitute some of the lighter-hearted progeny of Wisdom.

## II

As an essayist, Sir Max is a critic of prejudice; an iconoclast of fallacies both popular and refined.

The distinction between these two types of fixed ideas may, I think, be thus expressed. According to the vulgar insular mind, all foreigners are either rogues or insane: at the other wing-tip of opinion, we discover an equally false "aesthetic" notion that all foreigners are superior to us. Everyone has heard the "half-way" intellectual rhapsodising over Continental "isms," asserting



the foreigner's greater erudition, culture, courtesy, and handling of women. And to counter this more precious and "progressive" assertion, it takes an intelligent independent mind. "The English," wrote Coleridge, "have a morbid habit of petting and praising foreigners of any sort, to the unjust disparagement of their own worthies." It is often the truly international intellect that best displays to us our national merits.

The insular cult of the foreigner is one of those "fine" prejudices over which Sir Max lingers with a light and loving ridicule. In *Kolniyatsch*<sup>1</sup> his irony finds two objects for its play: the alien author selected for applause, and the fashionable attitude of exotic worship.

These foreign fellows [writes Sir Max], are always especially to be commended. By the mere mention of their names you evoke in the reader or hearer a vague sense of your superiority and his. . . . Where, for the genuine thrill, would England be but for her good fortune in being able to draw on a seemingly inexhaustible supply of anguished souls from the Continent—infantile wide-eyed Slavs, Titan Teutons, greatly blighted Scandinavians, all of them different, but all of them raving in one common darkness and with one common gesture plucking out their vitals for exportation?

*Kolniyatsch*, written in 1913, is a comment on a somewhat frenzied era of translation. This is not to suggest that Sir Max was deaf to the ululation of Slavonic genius; but rather that, with a fund of amusement, he foresaw the danger of primitivism as a spreading artistic tendency.

And concerning his life of "Kolniyatsch"—"a life happily not void of those sensational details which are what we all really care about"—how he exaggerates upon the violent, so that his figure appears to stand out as the acme of antinomianism:

Kolniyatsch was born, last of a long line of rag-pickers, in 1886. At the age of nine he had already acquired that passionate alcoholism which was to have so great an influence in the moulding of his character and on the trend of his thought. Otherwise he does not seem to have shown in childhood any exceptional promise. It was not before his eighteenth birthday that he murdered his grandmother and was sent to that asylum in which he wrote the poems and plays belonging to what we now call his earlier manner.

<sup>1</sup> *And Even Now*, 1920.

The social philanthropic notions, which have gained ascendancy since Sir Max wrote his essays have sensitised the minds of many of us to the point where we feel the first sentence to be more callous than comical; but we cannot deny to the passage as a whole the marks of a successful caricature-drawing, a caricature of "utterness"—of expressionism carried over into ethics, which in the land of the *via media* must always have something risible about it. Nor should we ignore the means by which this parody is created: the way in which the precocity of "Kolnuyatsch" (aged nine) in matters alcoholic is off-set by his belatedness (according to standards of Slav genius) in murdering his grandmother in his eighteenth year.

What, we may ask, is the principle, if any, behind Sir Max's casual "criticism"? At the start, it may look like waywardness, a personal literary instinct for mischief; but when the "criticism" is not concerned with making sport of prejudices, either learned or unlearned, it would seem to derive from an impulse to surprise—not for the sake of effect alone, but rather for the sake of truth. Just as Sir Max enjoys the spectacle of a common-place forced to turn a somersault, so he likewise delights to uncover the often naughty nakedness of our nature. But badly though this bareness sometimes shows, it is not for the pleasure of a scandalous exposure that Sir Max holds precious the denouncements of deceit. His magnificent re-phrasing of a letter-writer's vade-mecum in *How shall I word it?*<sup>1</sup> reveals his pursuit for truth beyond *esprit*. "Face to face with all this perfection," writes Sir Max of these copybook correspondents, "the not perfect reader begins to crave some little outburst of wrath, of hatred or malice, from one of these imaginary ladies and gentlemen." An illustration of "some little outburst" (how splendid the litotes in which he refers to the blistering impact of the following address!) may be discovered in "Letter to Member of Parliament Unseated at General Election," from which I quote the opening thirteen lines:

Dear Mr. Popsby-Burford,

Though I am myself an ardent Tory, I cannot but rejoice in the crushing defeat you have just suffered in West Odgetown. There are moments when political conviction is overborne by personal sentiment; and this is one of them. Your loss of the seat that you held is

<sup>1</sup> *And Even Now.*

the more striking by reason of the splendid manner in which the northern and eastern divisions of Odgetown have been wrested from the Liberal Party. The great bulk of the newspaper-reading public will be puzzled by your extinction in the midst of our party's triumph. But then, the great mass of the newspaper-reading public has not met you. I have.

There are moments when the control or suppression of our first raw feelings makes for growth of character; others when they lead to hypocrisy and cant. Few things are more fatal to the true promotion of the ethical life than an unrelieved attitude of "Chinese politeness." We must, on occasions, take ourselves for what we are, rather than for what we ought to be; lest dishonesty of spirit claim us for its own, and blunt the recognition of good and bad entirely.

It is of the essence of Sir Max as commentator that a personal reality and point-of-view (elusively recalcitrant to any common system) are ever present in his writings. Initially, we may mistake this attitude for capriciousness, a cult of inspired inconsistency; but in fact it is not of the feminine kind. Its nature stands arrayed in its own distinctiveness when we compare a "fad" of Sir Max with one of André Gide's notorious *actes gratuits*. "If I were reading a First Folio Shakespeare," Sir Max assures us in his essay *Whistler's Writing*,<sup>1</sup> "by my fireside, and if the matchbox were ever so little beyond my reach, I vow I would light my cigarette with a spill made from the margin of whatever page I was reading." Needless to observe, his assurance here is of a rhetorical and hypothetical order. The offence, which, he tells us, he would glibly commit is not an idle whim of vandalism; but a corrective against excessive bibliolatriy, in defence of the proper substance of literature; an assertion of the properties of style, wit, and imagination as against those of paper, binding, and print.

When we contrast this passage by Sir Max with those of André Gide in which he recounts how Michel (in the novel *L'Immoraliste*) collaborates with a farm-hand in poaching on his own estate; or how delighted he is to witness a favourite young Arab boy stealing a pair of shining scissors from him, which he makes no effort to recover; or how, in *Les Caves du Vatican*, the hero Lafcadio, for no other reason than the desire to experience

<sup>1</sup> Contained in the volume *Yet Again*, 1909.

the crime, pushes an inoffensive passenger out of the carriage of a train as it speeds across a deep gorge, the difference between the two ideas of destruction of values becomes apparent. Gide's *mystique* of "unmotivated crime"<sup>1</sup> is a part of his private worship of the impulse; is regressive and recidivistic, and takes no account of society. On the other hand, Sir Max's "barbarian" project is purposive and critical, aiming in its own spritely fashion at a true valuation of the nature of books.

*A cult of the anti-cult*: that perhaps is how we may sum-up the trend or direction of Sir Max's commentary. He has never allowed himself to be trapped in his own elegance as in a prison-cell. Author of a model essay on dandies,<sup>2</sup> he has avoided in his own work any fixed formulation of dandyism, whose rules he might have felt it incumbent to observe. Individualism *ne plus ultra*, as dandyism may be held to be, appears too limited for Sir Max's liking; inveterately he prefers to be himself.

This greater, less stereotyped personality, constantly evident in his writing, is what makes Sir Max, of the "Beardsley generation," the most convincing in tone and opinion. Wilde was weighed down by his "chrysoberyls," Lionel Johnson by his antique erudition, Symons by his excitement over "sin." All of these authors found it difficult to extricate themselves from their original premises, from the hardened shell of their self-ritual.

Unlike them, Sir Max has had the temerity of each fresh prejudice; for although his whole work is a tribute to taste, he has not permitted a standard called good to steal from him the pleasure of his own preferences. And in this fidelity to preference, there resides his own contribution to truth.

### III

To hear that one of his books had become "set reading" at an ancient English University would doubtless be calamitous news for Sir Max. With modesty and malice, he has told us that "self-respect and . . . ignorance" prevented him "from the otherwise easy task of being an academic critic";<sup>3</sup> and the thought that these properties were now confided to tender professorial

<sup>1</sup> François Mauriac's description.

<sup>2</sup> *Dandies and dandies (Works)*.

<sup>3</sup> *Why I Ought Not to Have Become a Dramatic Critic (Around Theatres)*.

care would probably appear to him as a mortal blow at any legitimate hopes of posterity. With this very natural fear and disappointment, we should readily sympathise; yet the question may be asked if his volume of parodies, *A Christmas Garland* (1912), would not more dextrously advance the aims of the "textual school" of criticism at Cambridge than a deal of dour polysyllabled talk of "operative sensibility," "critical-constructive interplay," and "poetical formulations of antecedently defined attitudes and beliefs." Since the promoters of the "Cambridge approach" are hardly likely to co-opt this suggestion into their scheme for educating the young, our anxiety over Sir Max's disturbance can happily be set at rest. Should it ever be realised, at least Sir Max, in his dismay, would be able to exonerate Oxford, whose English School fights shy of our language once it has assumed recognisable form.

For these few flippancies I must ask pardon, occasioned as they are by my difficulty in stating, with bare-faced directness, what I hold to be the case: that *A Christmas Garland* is one of the most valuable documents of criticism on certain modern writers; on Kipling, George Moore, Henry James, Meredith, Bennett, H. G. Wells, and others. The way in which good parody provides good criticism is obvious; and yet, so ambiguous is the day, that some preliminary remarks may be in keeping.

"The beginning of criticism is to read aright," states Mr. Percy Lubbock in his masterly work *The Craft of Fiction*, "in other words to get into touch with the book as nearly as may be." This counsel—in stressing the need to "cut closely" to the text as possible, tallies with the chief hortation of the "Cambridge school," with their emphasis on finer, more attentive reading. But however fine the tooth-comb which the textual critic takes (if his employment of it is to the end of criticism, not scholarship), the substance of his findings demand the adhesive of general statements, implying general values.

Of criticism, the only type which stays content with particularising comment is parody—an informal, creative, critical composition. "The beginning of criticism is to read aright"; and Sir Max has confessed to us how he "played the sedulous ape" to "this or that live writer—sometimes, it must be admitted, in the hope of learning rather what to avoid." His sly discipleship instructs as it delights.



Style results from a sense of self expressed by means of a sense of language. If this be so, the parodist stands in need of twin perceptions; one that recognises the thinking-process, and one the writing-process of his subject. Only if he has the access to the thinking-process of the victim, will the parodist be able to criticise the values, as well as the language, of his author. So in *P.C.*, X, 36, Sir Max hits off those less endearing aspects of the mind of "R\*D\*\*RD K\*PL\*NG." In an encounter between a constable and Santa Claus, he precipitates for us the following Kipling-esque obsessions: exaggerated respect for uniform, avid and guileless attention to the specialist, and a tendency to hero-worship, the latter particularly if combining with the former fetish. But Sir Max's parody carries us further. He shows us the analysed devotion to order imposed, like a tightly-fitting lid, upon a timid hysterical nature. "An' it's trunch, trunch, truncheon does the trick" (*Police Station Ditties*) resolves in one line of music-hall English those sadistic accents so often heard when Kipling descanted upon authority.<sup>1</sup>

Less cutting but equally critical is *Perkins and Mankind* by "H. G. W\*LLS." All the coarse over-confident side to that late-progressive's popular scientism is redolent in the names of the high-days and holidays observed in the future Utopian State. "General Cessation High-Tea" is partaken in the "Municipal Eating Rooms"; but the happiest festival of the year is known as "the ceremony of Making Way," by which the older citizens, no longer employable by the State, avail themselves of "the Municipal Lethal Chamber." ("I thought at one time," writes "H. G. W\*LLS," "that it would be best for every man to 'make way' when he reaches the age-limit. But I see now that this would savour of private enterprise.")

<sup>1</sup> Of all the parodies in *A Christmas Garland*, *P.C.*, X, 36 is the most unsparing. If this is studied in conjunction with *Kipling Entire* (a review of the novelist's dramatised story *The Light that Failed*, included in *Around Theatres*) and the caricature entitled "Mr. Rudyard Kipling takes a bloomin' Day aht, on the blasted 'Eath, along with Britannia, 'is Gurl," in *The Poet's Corner* (1904), it would seem that Sir Max "had it in" for his subject. In *Kipling Entire* he strikes at the cult of Kipling's "manlydom through violence" by suggesting that the author's name may be "the veil of a feminine identity." The "case" is brilliantly developed.

I think this triple assassination, on the part of a writer as kind as he is pert, is to be understood in terms of the parodist's insight into Kipling's literary psychosis—the radical unhealthiness underlying his prepossession with virility and brutality.

The element of insensitiveness—of a vulgar unawareness of vulgarity—which was present in Wells, is brought out to perfection. Perkins (the hero of the tale) is asking himself "What was the matter with the whole human race? He remembered again those words of Scragson's that had had such a depressing effect on him at the Cambridge Union—'Look here, you know! It's all a huge nasty mess, and we're trying to swab it up with a pocket handkerchief.' Well, he'd given up trying to do that. . . ."

Wells's weakness of taste, of discretion, is parodied in his bright picture of To-morrow, as much as in his censorious reflections on the unscientific defects of To-day. Here he is made to speak of "the beautiful young breed of men and women, who, in simple, artistic, antiseptic garments, are disporting themselves so gladly on this day of days" ("General Cessation Day," that is). The way in which "artistic" and "antiseptic" are placed side by side to nullify each other and render the prospect ridiculous, reveals Sir Max's nice feeling for those killing verbal opposites which few possess.

Perhaps the parody which encompasses the greatest number of its subject's "notes" is *Dickens* by "G\*\*RGE M\*\*RE." Everything is here, from Moore's tags in French (consciously exhibited, as it were, like a naughty schoolboy's dragging shoe-laces) and Frenchified construction ("the north west wind that makes the pollard aspens to quiver"), to his tergiversations and unstable enthusiasms, his unreliable information (Tintoretto is referred to as a Flemish painter), and the parading of his sexual preoccupation ("There are moments when one does not think of girls, are there not, dear reader?").

Moore's flimsy powers of veneration for the masters of the past, as anything more than the changing digits of his latest artistic whims, are reflected in the following passage: "In those days I was kneeling at other altars, I was scrubbing other doorsteps. . . . He [Mr. Wardle of Dickens] is better than all Balzac's figures rolled into one . . . I used to kneel at that doorstep."

The acme of "M\*\*RE's" aesthetic capriciousness, as Sir Max presents him to us, is where the novelist finds that he can no longer express his thoughts on his heroine in English. "Elle est plus vieille que les roches entre lesquelles elle s'assise," he begins—translating into French Pater's "gala" passage on the Mona Lisa—only to break off with, "I desist, for not through French

can be expressed the thoughts that surge in me. French is a stale language. So are all the European languages, one can say in them nothing fresh. . . . The stalest of them all is Erse."

"Criticism undiluted"—this expression comes from Sir Max's discourse on Lytton Strachey, delivered as the Rede Lecture for 1943; and describes a species of activity in which he engages only with reluctance. On succeeding Bernard Shaw as the dramatic critic of *The Saturday Review*, in 1898, he made his repugnance for "responsible straight thinking" delightfully and ironically clear. "This absurd post which I have accepted," he wrote, "will interfere with my freedom in life, and is quite likely to spoil and exhaust such talent as I might otherwise be exercising in literary art. However, I will not complain. The Editor of this paper has come to me as Romeo came to the apothecary, and what he wants I give him for the apothecary's reason."<sup>1</sup>

However disagreeable a duty this suggests, the fact remains that Sir Max held this office till 1910—a dozen odd years!—during which he wrote what seems to me the most intelligent, and intelligible, prose that our murky century has produced. This obviously calls for definition; and I should like, for the present purpose, to employ the distinction which Thomas Hobbes made between "natural" and "acquired wit," the first of which I would equate with the term "intelligence" and the second with "intellect." By "natural wit" Hobbes understood that "which is gotten by use only and experience; without method, culture, or instruction": by "acquired wit," that gained by "method and instruction." The true name of this wit, he tells us, is "reason."

By designating Sir Max's dramatic criticism as *the prose of intelligence*, I do not mean to deny to his writing those properties of culture as we understand the word. When Hobbes describes "natural wit" as that in which culture plays no formative part, he is thinking mainly of a rational culture, a scientific and systematic discipline; something synonymous with logical method; and not of that all-round exercise of the understanding, imagination, and sensibility which we have in mind to-day. Sir Max's

<sup>1</sup> All quotations in this section of the essay, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the volume *Around Theatres*. The titles given in these footnotes are the titles of reviews and articles appearing in that volume.

definition of "a good critic" is disingenuous almost in its simplicity: "a cultured man with brains and a temperament," as he tells us, very much by the way, in his essay on Ouida.<sup>1</sup> For one kind of "good critic" that well may pass; but, apart from "temperament," it hardly serves to enumerate the elements distinguishing Sir Max in this role. I return to the term "intelligence" in the hope of filling out the formula a little. Nimbleness, manœuvrability, a quick shrewd sense for the strong points of a case, a native alertness and originality, an indifference to being either in or out of fashion where the merits and worth of an object are in question: these, I think, are the marks of "intelligence" wherever that faculty is exercised in judgment; and these it is that illuminate the prose of Sir Max as a dramatic critic.

"The tart ozone of distinction": that is a phrase which the essayist used to fix the social tone of Covent Garden in the 'nineties; and if each mind may be said to have its savour, that of Sir Max is distinctive, tart, and salted. Here, in his dramatic writings, the wise affectations of the essayist have been sharpened down to a stylish common sense, while the waspish blandness has been exchanged for an urbane forthrightness of manner. A wit not too fine for general understanding; a judgment poised and independent; and a power of utterly personal praise—these are his "quarterings" in this jostled field.

Sir Max's twelve-year tenure of office as dramatic critic may be simply summarised: a persistent understanding of the art of shock-treatment. On starting his employ with the *Saturday Review*, Sir Max played his first disconcerting gambit.<sup>2</sup> "Frankly," he wrote, "I have none of that instinctive love of the theatre which is the first step towards good criticism of drama. I am not fond of the theatre. Dramatic art interests me less than any of the other arts." Sir Max knew the publicity-value of starting off on the wrong foot: a soldier out of step is singled out immediately, while his conforming comrades escape exact attention. But there was more to his ruse than this. His statement was a move towards a less "be-glamorised" discussion of the subject. In effect, it served to warn the players that a strong predisposition to things theatrical was not present, in this case, to help obscure or scale down their imperfections. With this critic, there was no relying on a generous "free" start. In addition to this, Sir Max's reference

<sup>1</sup> More, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Why I Ought Not to have become a Dramatic Critic.*

to his interest in "the other arts" implied that he did not look upon the theatre as the "be-all and end-all" of aesthetic creation. It suggested that drama and acting should be judged by standards on a par with those applied to music, painting, and letters; that here was a critic completely unenchanted by the magic isolation of the green-room and the footlights.

From this, one might easily suppose that Sir Max was in favour of "the theatre of the future"; a champion of "intellectual" *avant-garde* drama, with but little attention for the ordinary "straight piece." In fact, his patronage was almost for this latter, for if he extended a blithe poetic welcome to the stage innovations of Mr. Gordon Craig,<sup>1</sup> the general course of his criticism was what "advanced circles" might term "reactionary." For this, there were several reasons. Pre-eminently his judgments were delivered upon the play as a "performance"; not as the text of, or blue-print for, one. In other words, his care was not to know how the play might *read* off the stage: what concerned him was how it *acted*, with one particular cast, on the night in question. This made him a close and keen critic of acting; balanced as it was by a pinch of disdain for the inanities and vanities of performers.

For the "high-brow" notion of drama, he had small liking.<sup>2</sup> "The value of the thing said," he insisted, "depends not on the value of the thing it is said about. . . . Good sense about trivialities is better than nonsense about things that matter."<sup>3</sup>

A third aspect of Sir Max's "traditional" preferences as a critic derive from his instinctive understanding of the relationship between drama and society. This comes out especially in his notices on the music-halls, which contain some of his best dramatic writing. "The mass of people when it seeks pleasure," he maintained, "does not want to be elevated; it wants to laugh at something beneath its own level."<sup>4</sup> Speaking in favour of *The Older and Better Music Hall*, he observes that, "This is one of the advantages of the old music hall over the new: it does reflect, in however grotesque a way, the character of the class to which it consciously appeals."

<sup>1</sup> *Mr. Craig's Experiment*.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw, however, escaped with few scars; though much that he wrote irritated Sir Max.

<sup>3</sup> *Inquiry into a convention*.

<sup>4</sup> *At the Tivoli*.



To "refine" the music-hall by transforming it into cabaret or musical comedy seemed to Sir Max an anti-social action, fraught with danger to the Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

Great art requires great audiences; but the following of a "fit though few" minority is not the public a dramatist desires. Somehow he must touch and come home to one social stratum or an entire cross-section. And to do this, he must probably combine his innovation and uniqueness with a friendly proportion of the known, as a reassuring bait for the popular mind.<sup>2</sup> This, or something a deal more subtle, is implied in Sir Max's dramatic writing; and is the one chief intuition unifying his theatrical outlook.

Regarding the limits of criticism—his own and that of critics in general—Sir Max was unreservedly clear. "A definite self—that is what one most needs in a critic," he wrote in a review<sup>3</sup> of Arthur Symons' book *Plays, Acting and Music*: 'It takes all kinds to make a world.' Every quality has its defect, and it is only by eclectic reading that we can behold that monster, the perfect critic."

His own preferences in critical writing, he expressed with witty succinctness: "I revere the expert in art; but I prefer the occasional critic. The mischief of being an expert is this: long before you have fairly earned the title, you have exhausted what you had to say; and, moreover, your knowledge of life and of the other arts has been rusting."

Well, Sir Max has earned his title right enough: not a name to be found, for a little space, in the transient directories of specialised knowledge; but a place in the *Almanach de Gotha* of art—a knighthood possessing the longevity of letters.

<sup>1</sup> See *At the Gaiety*.

<sup>2</sup> We have convincing evidence of this in Mr. T. S. Eliot's dramatic development. How much more "popular," in aim and appeal, is *The Confidential Clerk* to *The Cocktail Party*, and *The Cocktail Party* to *Family Reunion*!

<sup>3</sup> *An Aesthetic Book*.

## THE UNDERSTANDING OF PAUL CLAUDEL

THE DEATH of Paul Claudel has been given the prominence that is due to one who was unquestionably the greatest living French poet, probably the greatest poet of the last sixty or seventy years. The British press, as well as the French, has paid its tribute, though not always with the knowledge and understanding of his work that one would have desired for the cultural credit of one's own country. It has indeed been suggested that his work is known only to a small number of people on this side of the Channel and that a certain esoteric quality, to which religious dogmatism and mysticism contribute, renders it not only difficult of comprehension but even alien to the spirit of the English. If that is true, it is a sad reflection on our contemporary culture. Writing at a time when Claudel had yet to produce his finest works and before he himself was a Christian, Rivière said of *La jeune fille Violaine* (in a letter to Alain Fournier): "And, above all, the admirable thing is the infinite simplicity of all that. There is not a word that a child cannot understand. One must be corrupted as we all are by years of literature not to grasp it right away and in the smallest details." What Rivière stressed in his study of Claudel was the poet's naturalness, the naturalness of his language, of his metaphors and rhythms.

It has been regretted that so little of Claudel's work has been translated into English, though his major plays and certain poems have in fact been translated, many years ago. However, poetry cannot be rendered into another language; either one translates into unsatisfactory prose or writes another poem that has usually little relationship with the original. The work of Claudel, like that of any other French poet, has to be read in French, but, though he is a highly original and even idiosyncratic poet, his work has none of the hermetic quality of a Mallarmé or even a Valéry. Nothing is simpler and more lucid, for instance, than *L'Annonce faite à Marie*. His language and his thought are indeed very personal, but once one has familiarised oneself with his idiom and with his ideas, a process admittedly requiring a certain application, as is often the case with a writer worth reading, the key is possessed to the whole of his work. In any case, for those disinclined to make much effort, M. Jacques Madaule has provided by his books on Claudel excellent expositions of the work which reveal a most unusual degree of sympathy with another writer's mind. Perhaps an English publisher would do good service by having M. Madaule's works translated. Prepared by this commentator, no one able to read French would find any work of Claudel's impenetrable.

I have dwelt perhaps overlong on this matter of comprehension, because I feel that there is a legend which needs to be dispelled. The only real way in which to admire a great poet is, after all, to read his work and possibly many have been deterred from acquiring the rich experience that Claudel's work offers by the preconception that it is abstruse. For the Christian the great themes that recur in this work, human love and suffering, renunciation, exile and death, the joy of God's love, the Communion of Saints, should not seem obscure, though they naturally reflect something of the mystery inherent in the deepest issues of life. Indeed, the criticism may be made of Claudel's plays that in a sense there is insufficient mystery; God's designs are shown with a certainty to which the human being is hardly able to attain in this life. It must not be overlooked, however, that as well as the great plays, *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, *Partage de Midi*, *Le Soulier de Satin*, there are the fine lyrical poems, *Cinq grandes Odes*, and the shorter poems, many of which are grouped together in *Feuilles de Saints* and *Corona benignitatis anni Dei*. It is in these latter volumes that the humble and simple things of life are sung and that the humanity of Claudel appears most clearly, most attractively. The poem on Verlaine, for instance, reveals, not an arrogant judge, but a man infinitely comprehending. Those unacquainted with Claudel's work might do well to begin with these volumes.

Claudel's legacy to French literature is considerable, comprising numerous prose works in addition to the poems and plays. He was not a fastidious craftsman painfully producing a few rare distillations of poetic fantasy; he was exuberant, expansive, abundantly creative. It would be foolish to pretend that all that he wrote is of the first order or that he did not on occasion achieve unfortunate effects, but his faults should not blind us to the quality of his achievement. He is the sole poet in France since the seventeenth century who has created poetic drama which is certain to stand the test of time and it is, moreover, poetic drama deeply, essentially, Christian. One has, I think, to go back to Dante to find a poet who has given expression to a vision of the world which is comparably based on Christian belief. There is nothing finer in twentieth century literature than *Le Soulier de Satin*, whatever criticisms may be made of certain aspects of this play.

Parallel with this immense literary output was Claudel's gradual rise in the diplomatic service. His distinguished career in the world of practical affairs is symptomatic of the richness of his nature; his poetic genius did not preclude his full participation in human activities. At the age of twenty-two, which was when his reconciliation with the Church took place, he was admitted to the *Concours des Affaires Etrangères* and in the year following he left for the United States on the first of his many journeys in the consular service. After various appoint-

ments in different countries it was at the age of fifty-two that he reached ambassadorial status. *Le Soulier de Satin* was written while he was Ambassador in Tokyo. A few years later, as Ambassador in Washington, he negotiated the Kellogg-Briand pact. The fact that he distinguished himself simultaneously in such different spheres of life possibly evoked a certain jealousy; it is no doubt hard for writers whom fortune perhaps has not favoured to forgive a success which is not only literary; no doubt, too, the categorical nature of some of his assertions, especially in his later years, did not increase affection for him. Whatever the final assessment may be of the man, the hard core of his Christian integrity is not in doubt. He was a force, rugged, uncompromising, and his death removes from the literary scene a powerful Christian voice.

Often the death of a writer is followed by an eclipse, either temporary or permanent. In the case of Claudel there is little likelihood of this. *L'Annonce faite à Marie* has just been added to the repertoire of the Comédie Française over forty years after it was written, and it is now thirty years since *Le Soulier de Satin* was completed. Claudel lived to such a ripe age that the judgment of posterity is already forming and his work will undoubtedly reach an ever widening public. He will in all probability take his place beside Corneille, Racine, and Hugo.

ERNEST BEAUMONT

## REVIEWS

MATTEO RICCI

*The Wise Man from the West*, by Vincent Cronin (Rupert Hart-Davis 18s).

EVERYTHING seems to conspire to make Mr. Vincent Cronin's biography of Fr. Matteo Ricci an exceptionally interesting literary treat. Here is a man whose life was as extraordinary as that of almost any other European, and yet who has remained unknown to the general public, but whose activities could be discovered by the industrious. Here too we have a writer, Mr. Vincent Cronin, whose talent is precisely to create the atmosphere for the story and who has that catholic and Christian outlook capable of appreciating the hidden springs of Fr. Ricci's thought and work. All these things have contributed to make of this book a moving and profoundly fascinating story.

How was it that, when not a soul could enter China, Fr. Ricci within a few years of arriving in the Far East could install himself at Peking and be considered one of the greatest literati in the land? This

is the puzzle that Mr. Cronin succeeds in explaining, and simply by letting the story tell itself, or so it seems, so skilful is he as a story-teller.

The book is divided into three portions, the first relating to the early life of Fr. Ricci, the second covering the life of Fr. Ricci the missionary, the third a rapid survey of the fortunes of the Catholic Church in China from the date of Fr. Ricci's death to the present day. Of the three the third is bound to be the least satisfactory since it is impossible to compress so full a story into so small a space. Nevertheless it was worth doing, even briefly, in order to round off the account. The first section probably contains all that is at present known about Ricci's youth. As Mr. Cronin points out, Fr. Ricci, though versed in astronomy and mathematics, was still unaware of the Copernican revolution.

The main part of the book, thirteen out of the fourteen chapters, is devoted to Ricci in China. The whole is told as a story, the conversations are in direct speech, the setting is minutely and beautifully described. But beware of supposing that therefore this is a romance. The author follows most faithfully Fr. Ricci's own account, which he, out of humility, put in the third person and which therefore for three hundred years was thought to have been written by another.

The research in this book is considerable, but, if one did not know the difficulties of finding out about Chinese matters, it would not strike the casual reader. For instance, we are given a most interesting portrait of another great man, Alessandro Valignano, the Provincial of the Jesuits in the Far East. Vincent Cronin is at home too with Confucianism and with the fanciful Chinese calendar. We follow Ricci along the Grand Canal into the Forbidden City. Such is the author's skill in description that one might almost imagine oneself sharing Ricci's life three and a half centuries later. Here is the description of Fr. Ricci and his companions entering the Peking imperial palace:

Before them stretched a line of immensely wide courtyards separated by towering gateways and flanked by carved white marble balustrades. At each side, raised on marble terraces, stood red pavilions, many with double superimposed roofs. Westwards a canal led through gardens rampant with tigers, leopards and bears, to a sequestered lake. The grouping of the buildings, laid out in accordance with the pole star and adjoining constellations, was purposely processional. Man was first rendered insignificant by the vast courtyards, then drawn inwards by a gravity of being to the centre of the terrestrial universe.

This book is not a "thriller," but it has another kind of excitement, the one you experience when playing hide-and-seek in the dark.



Ricci was alone against an empire. One false move, one misconceived reply, and the whole fabric of years would be destroyed in a day. He was like a man on a tight-rope, with a forest of hands always on the point of shaking the poles upon which the rope was suspended, and he come tumbling down. It is this element of suspense which the author has in some subtle way created in his pages: those long lonely nights in Shiu-hing, the only European in the whole of China; that first rush to Peking and that isolation, because the mandarins were not sure which way the imperial cat was going to jump; the imprisonment in "the castle of barbarians." All the chances were on the side of utter failure. Nothing seemed to tell on the side of Ricci, except his indomitable faith, his most cautious prudence, his amazing industry in learning the language and Chinese ways. His memory became a byword throughout China. Scholars would come from the other end of the country to buy if they could the secret of it from him.

The production of this book is a pleasure to contemplate. Especially the illustrations are to be commended. They help to create that atmosphere so necessary for an understanding of the remoteness, the difference of China from western ways. Ricci was a pioneer in cultural relations as well as one of the greatest missionaries of all time. The Far East and the Far West had never really yet come face to face, except in a flash of dazzling light with Marco Polo and a few contemporaries. But here was the West knocking at the very gates. Of all those who knocked only the Jesuits were allowed entry. In this matter too Mr. Cronin gives us all the essentials and in such a way as to make the clash of thought be almost heard over again today. I mean specially the chapter "A Banquet in Nanking."

It is the habit of reviewers to show their superior knowledge by picking some minor quarrel. I have no desire to do that. But I would like to put a question which still puzzles me. How was it that Ricci chose as his successor P. Longobardi, whom he knew was not in agreement with him over the question of the Chinese rites? Was it *faute de mieux*? Was it the one grave blunder he made? True, he did not appoint his successor, but Longobardi was his personal choice.

COLUMBA CARY-ELWES

### A CELT IN WORLD POLITICS

*Tempestuous Journey.* Lloyd George: His Life and Times, by Frank Owen (Hutchinson 25s).

ENGLISH POLITICAL HISTORY in recent times may often seem to be tamer than that of some other countries, but it has not lacked exciting episodes, and even in the present century two of our Prime

Ministers have narrowly escaped losing their lives at the hands of enraged mobs, though neither, it is true, while actually holder of that exalted office. Lord Balfour, unpopular with the Arabs owing to his Zionist associations, was compelled to make a precipitate flight from Damascus. The other occasion was a very different one and in less romantic surroundings. Its scene was the neo-classical edifice, a reproduction of the Temple of Jupiter Stator, which then served as Birmingham's townhall. The country was engaged in a highly popular war in South Africa which, however, was regarded as unnecessary by a section of the Liberal Party. On 18 December, 1901, David Lloyd George, Member for Caernarvon Boroughs, was due to address a peace meeting. The events of the evening are graphically narrated by Mr. Owen. A "patriotic" mob not only prevented the speaker from delivering his speech but threatened his personal safety. At the urgent request of the Chief Constable, Lloyd George reluctantly assumed the disguise of a policeman in which he made his escape. It may be doubted whether any British statesman has shown greater physical courage than did he when he hurled defiance at Joseph Chamberlain then at the height of his prestige.

Fifteen years after the Birmingham riot, the erstwhile peace leader had become the nation's war leader in the greatest war in which Britain had ever been engaged. It was a war even more popular than the South African one and those who regretted the change in Lloyd George were relatively few. Mr. Owen has nothing to tell of the mishandling by his Government of the papal peace note of 1917, but Lloyd George thought in terms of a "knock-out blow" and his mind would not have entered with the same facility as Lord Lansdowne's into the considerations which influenced the policy of the Vatican.

Lloyd George remained Prime Minister till the autumn of 1922, four years after the Armistice. The other three members of the "Big Four" at Versailles, Wilson, Clemenceau and Orlando had already gone. Though more than twenty years of public life remained to him, Lloyd George never held office again and lived to preside over the reduction of the once mighty Liberal Party to an impotent handful in the House of Commons. Unlike so many other statesmen he never had the experience of losing his seat. Caernarvon Boroughs remained faithful to him in fourteen successive elections. When Lloyd George was seventy-six years of age came the Second World War. It found him an elder statesman, seventeen years out of office and with no share in the policy which led up to it. He had indeed visited the Führer at Berchtesgaden and thought he found Nationalist Socialist leaders too pre-occupied by what they called the "Red Menace" to understand the fears of German expansion. There was some doubt whether the ex-premier would enter the Government when it was reconstituted in

1940. His doctor considered that he was too old to take charge of a departmental ministry, but he had other reasons for hesitating to join it. Till Russia entered the war he did not believe that the Allies could win. He devoted himself to questions of food production, but he may have thought it possible that some turn of fortune's wheel would call him back to office. He died very shortly after receiving a peerage of which some of his friends regretted his acceptance. Under different circumstances, Lloyd George might have been a Welsh nationalist leader, and another, and perhaps more successful, Parnell. But he chose to be an imperial statesman instead.

From one point of view he was unfitted to be the leader of Welsh nationalism. Politically he regarded Welsh Nonconformity as something of the utmost beneficence, but doctrinally he was a sceptic. In his youth he had passed through a crisis in the matter of religious belief. It had been resolved in a strange way. An old Methodist minister in Merionethshire, with whom he was spending the night, lent him Renan's *Life of Jesus*. In contemplating the portrait of Christ as an ideal man, he seemed to find spiritual repose. Years later during the great struggle over the "People's Budget," he delivered an address from the Chair of the Baptist Union on the theme "No hope for Democracy except in Jesus of Nazareth." An enigmatic incident shortly before the statesman's death may be connected with his early conflicts. One afternoon, when his wife thought he was asleep, he suddenly opened his eyes, and called out: "The Sign of the Cross! The Sign of the Cross!"

Lloyd George's public career coincides with the decline and eventual disintegration of the old English governing class and witnessed the advent to high office of men belonging to a different social stratum. When he became Prime Minister it would not have been easy, if indeed possible, with the exception of Disraeli to name a predecessor who was not a university man. Nearly all had been public school men. David Lloyd George was neither. When the First World War is as far away as the Napoleonic Wars are to-day, and the subject of this biography is as remote as William Pitt, there will be needed another study of Lloyd George written by a philosophical historian and assigning to him his true role in English history. Judgments formed hurriedly in 1916 will need to be revised. Mr. Frank Owen has written as a journalist, and even if at times we think him superficial, we must admit that he is often graphic.

HUMPHREY J. T. JOHNSON

## SIXTEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

*English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, excluding Drama*, by C. S. Lewis (Oxford University Press 30s).

THERE IS A GENEROSITY about Professor Lewis's conception of literature which combines scientific thoroughness with high reasoning as well as with sensitive appreciation. Such an unusual combination is particularly helpful with the greater poets; the pages on the sonnets of Shakespeare and the lyrics of Thomas Campion are a joy to read. But what is perhaps even more to be praised is that the acres of *dull* poetry, which he has to cover, become full, under his skilled hand, of entertainment as well of information. There is no question but that the book is a fine bit of "Literary History." The only question is whether it is equally good as a "History of Literature." One has the sensation sometimes of being conjured into a magic cavern rather than conducted round an historic pile. In his division of the century into "the drab" and "the golden" he several times disclaims any intention to praise or blame in these epithets. Yet it soon becomes evident that such disclaimers are not to be taken seriously.

The mid-century is an earnest, heavy-handed, commonplace age: a drab age. Then, in the last quarter of the century, the unpredictable happens. With startling suddenness we ascend. Fantasy, conceit, paradox, colour, incantation return. Youth returns.

A suspicion persists: that in this startling, sudden and unpredictable ascent of the golden, the scales have been artificially weighted against the drab. For example, the treatment of Wyatt, in the chapter on "Drab Age Verse," seems sour and meagre. When Professor Lewis is handling Spenser, he is at pains to show that the figure of Florimel (who flutters about from one attempted rape to another) is really a fugitive glimpse of abiding beauty such as haunts the *Aeneid*. Yet Wyatt's haunting sonnet, "Whoso list to hunt," with its elfland music, is not so much as mentioned. Again, Professor Lewis refuses to discuss the causes of the golden efflorescence. Yet it is possible to distinguish two different kinds of excellence in good Elizabethan poetry; there is the lyric note which owes so much to musicians like William Byrd, and there is the gracious colouring, the throb of passion, which is so often an imitation or emulation of Italian, French and Spanish. But can the emergence of the first be regarded as "sudden," or of the second as "unpredictable"?

These queries in the realm of verse are somewhat vague; but in the realm of prose it is possible to be more precise. Why is there no mention of Edmund Campion's *History of Ireland*, which was "golden" ten years before the starting-point allowed by Professor Lewis, and of

Thomas Stapleton's translation of Bede's History (1565) which was pronounced by the late R. W. Chambers, I think, to be one of the classics of our language? There is a theory that England would have been better off for prose in the third quarter of the century if there had not been so many Catholic scholars in exile for the faith. The only one of these exiles that Professor Lewis handles is Cardinal Allen. He does so tenderly, yet evasively, wrapping him up in a demonstration that his style was not *like* Dryden's in the sense of "reminiscent of"—but did anyone ever say that it was? And in a criticism of the content of one of Allen's books, it is a shock to notice that the book is misrepresented.

But perhaps the most surprising omissions from the list of prose-writers are those of Robert Persons and Robert Southwell. The run on their books—heavily banned though they were—in the last decade of the century was one of the signs of the breakdown of what might be called "Arcadianism"—a precarious structure of antique chivalry, pagan exuberance and classical rules. In other countries Catholic culture and piety were broad and deep enough to carry the structure and make a fair unity of it in the baroque. But in England there was an abrupt and even savage revulsion; some turned away to a polished cynicism, some on to a progressive puritanism, and some back after all to Catholicism. Professor Lewis, who prefers to think of the century as closing in a golden haze, is puzzled to know why Spenser retracted his *Courtly Love* poems in 1596 and turned to plain religion instead. The most likely reason, surely, is the state of the market. In the one year, 1595-6, publishers brought out eight editions of Southwell's verse and prose.

From a literary point of view these omissions do not impair the beauty and harmony of Professor Lewis's picture. From an historical point of view their implications are too ramified to bear discussion here. It might be well, however, for the Catholic to remember that Professor Lewis's book is written on the assumption that England became Protestant in the sixteenth century without any consciousness of violent change.

CHRISTOPHER DEVLIN

### THE GREAT REBELLION

*The King's Peace 1637-1641* by C. V. Wedgwood (Collins 25s).

WITH THIS VOLUME Miss Wedgwood has begun her history of the period of the Civil Wars which will bear the general title of *The Great Rebellion*. The work will form a valuable contribution to the history of the period and is marked by that skill and sureness of



touch which we have come to associate with Miss Wedgwood's studies. The portrait of the King is singularly convincing and the description of his character takes all the elements in his position into account. Throughout the book the authoress is almost always successful in her delineation of character and in the matter of the relations of her principal figures with one another.

The book is divided into long chapters which gives the authoress opportunity for the development at ease of her gift for narrative. The first chapter entitled "Court and Country" is a remarkable account of the general setting of the period and forms a fitting introduction to the series of linked volumes. A great part of the book deals with the beginnings of the troubles in Scotland and these are set out clearly. The logical development of that situation is clearly emphasised. In particular Miss Wedgwood has seized accurately the character and role of the Marquis of Hamilton. The interaction of English, Scottish and Irish affairs is set down plainly; Miss Wedgwood pays a warm tribute to the work of S. R. Gardiner and her general approach follows the same lines. There is a lucid account of ship-money. Throughout the volume the comments on questions relating to the revenue and to monopolies are most illuminating.

The middle section of the book covers the two years between July 1637 and the ending of the first Scots War. The final section headed "An Army in Ireland" deals with the struggle between Strafford and his enemies and brings the story down to the King's final departure from Edinburgh in the autumn of 1641. The account of Strafford will command general agreement and the authoress has told us all that we are ever likely to discover about the personality and the motives of John Pym. Her approach to Anglican and Catholic questions is sympathetic and understanding. The references to Wales in this volume are few and that country played a minor part in the whole conflict. In some later book the author might consider giving a fairly brief but special section to Welsh events.

*The King's Peace* is well produced and the illustrations are excellent. The Van Dyck portrait of William of Orange and Princess Mary is especially attractive. The whole book reads smoothly and the series when complete will form a real achievement.

DAVID MATHEW

## SHORTER NOTICES

*Cardinal Manning*, by Shane Leslie (Clonmore and Reynolds 18s).

SIR SHANE LESLIE published his great work, *The Life and Labours of Cardinal Manning*, so long ago as 1921, and his secondary aim was to refute the scandalous "Life" by Purcell. The present volume contains the pith of his original book. But Purcell was followed by Lytton Strachey, who was endowed with a quite poisonous power of malevolent suggestion and whose method has only of late been denounced as it deserved. He too needs refutation, but this is, we think, supplied by the book itself without explicit reference; indeed, Strachey's name does not appear in the index. Manning's career is, no doubt, well known; anyhow, the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Slesser provides its outline in a wise and lengthy preface, which leaves to one side those trivialities which, alas, cannot be omitted in the Life itself and are to the taste of the gossip-lover. To our mind, Manning wrote in three different ways, two of which are probably common to everyone in his position. In his official pronouncements or spiritual works he wrote a clear and dignified English. When writing to personages, he had the Victorian trick of using metaphors or allusions indicating that he and his correspondent, like Gladstone, knew themselves (perhaps unconsciously) to be on a high level of culture; and, lastly, in purely private correspondence, he "let himself go," and showed plenty of signs of temper and an almost obsessional bias in regard of those of whose ideas he disapproved, Newman not least who, ironically, he described as having ruined himself by "temper." Unfortunately, in an abbreviated Life, short exciting sentences and vividly summarised episodes may obscure our view of a man as a whole: thus an unreflecting reader might really gather even from these pages that the sensitive Newman was chillily fractious, or that Manning was an intriguer. The author, whose own style is brilliant and allusive, knows so much more than a modern reader can remember, that his own sentences seem sometimes disconnected, and we may wish that he had sacrificed some of his epigrams. But we may think, on the one hand, that Manning's two enterprises—the University in London and the Seminary there—collapsed because in founding them he was not single-minded, he wanted, in other words, to prevent something else; while on the other hand he was most truly himself in his intense love for the poor and down-trodden—here nothing interfered with his profound sense of justice and his heart-felt pity. We see this expressed already in his notes written during his retreat of 1865 when about to be consecrated archbishop. Perhaps what most obscured the real man was that he had always to be dealing with "causes," and politics more or less

ecclesiastical. "If I were to undertake souls one by one, I should neglect them by thousands." Yet we remember some great prelates who have confronted, and solved, this crucifying alternative.

*Abbé Pierre and the Ragpickers*, by Boris Simon, translated by Lucie Noel (Harvill Press 15s).

NOT LONG AGO the Abbé Pierre's name was much quoted in England, and his story occupied the Press for a short time, but apparently it has lost interest because no longer news. Mr. Simon's book is not a biography, but the story of "Emmaus," which is glorious because of its account of self-sacrifice, and tragic because of the injustice and coldness of hearts that had aroused men to such heroism. Abbé Pierre and his group, disgusted by the sight of armies of men making plans upon paper year by year, took possession of a piece of land and built shelters upon it, sent out their friends to "ragpick" in refuse dumps and thus provide enough furniture to enable babies to be born at least under a tarpaulin sheet and wives saved from taking in desperation to the streets. All this activity was quite illegal, as the Abbé (who had been a Deputy) perfectly well knew. In England, his huts, which became genuine tiny houses, would probably have been demolished. We do not know whether in our worst slums such appalling conditions are paralleled: but we know enough about overcrowding to know, too, that we must never be surprised by infection or by incest. We know, further, that human misery is never going to be ended by legislation and that no Welfare State, by itself, is ever going to cure so sick a world. Abbé Pierre does not enquire whether his guests are Christians—perhaps, in traditional-minded France, they were baptised, so something in them guessed the Christianity that, in his person, they may have met for the first time. We would wish for an immense wave of self-sacrifice to sweep from all Catholic hearts over this land, and carry with it the conviction that the Faith means something, in fact, means the only thing that saves. But it will imply a shattering awakening from our respectability, and the reversal, as they say, of every value in our social life. As for the book, the variety of types it portrays is amazing: the story of "Djibouti" is worth a dozen sermons.

*Portugal and Madeira*, by Sacheverell Sitwell (Batsford 18s).

CASUALLY GLANCING at the vast Iberian peninsula one is apt to overlook the existence of Portugal, and we are grateful to Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell, who not only reveals a unique country but with something approaching genius leads us through the now familiar though

no less enchanting Sitwellian world of fantasy. He introduces us to the wine kingdom of Oporto, with its club-like lodges, and the pink champagne of Lamego, the organ cases of Braga and Villa do Conde and the golden coaches of Belém, the palace of Queluz, with its Louis XVI gardens, and that of Mafra, the Portuguese Escorial, Pinhaio with its straw-coated shepherds and Nazare with its fisher girls, the forest of Buçaco, "remote as a dream," and the tropical gardens with its night-blowing Cereus, that is Madeira. The native Rococo, with its twisted pillars and mammoth shells, approaches the Hindu, and church interiors are garnished with blue and white *azulejo* tiles and theatrical gilded pelmets.

Mr. Sitwell is a connoisseur of monasteries, to use a perhaps unfortunate phrase which has lately gained currency. Following in the footsteps of Beckford he visited Alcobaça and Batalha. His journey, however, was made in a less intriguing age, and in place of Beckford's painted and gilded ceilings, Persian rugs and kitchen with fish tanks he encountered a desert of chiselled stone, its golden patina reduced to bone-whiteness. There are many such museum-pieces, and one wishes that the author had introduced us to such living monasteries as the ancient abbey of Cucajaes. The deserted Convent of Conceição is referred to as that of Mariana Alcoforado, "The Portuguese Nun." The famous love letters, however, are no longer attributed to her, and indeed they belong to French rather than Portuguese literature. In references to the latter no mention is made of Antonio Ferreira, whose *Castro* was probably the first successful tragedy on classical lines in modern European literature.

*The King My Brother*, by C. H. Hartmann (Heinemann 21s).

THIS IS QUITE the most charming book that we have read about Charles II, but it must not be thought that, because charming, it is unimportant. Mr. Hartmann had already written about Charles and his sister Henriette-Anne, in his *Charles II and Madame*, but that was twenty years ago, and this is a genuinely new book. As Sir Arthur Bryant says in his preface, Charles is put in a light under which he is seldom seen, as politician and indeed statesman. The Treaty of Dover made all the difference to our history. Charles was no puppet of Louis XIV, nor can James and Pepys claim all the credit for our navy. All the same, the book is about Charles and his sister Minette, and this story is so enchanting that we may be forgiven if we yield to the personality of these two, and leave to their lower place the miserable things which are far off, though they cannot be quite forgotten. The sister was shrewd, even caustic, as well as a tiny elfin young woman whom everyone fell in love with—even Louis, who called her, at

first, the "bones of the Holy Innocents." Charles is not, perhaps, quite so enigmatic, especially when we recall the co-existence of contraries so often to be found in one person, especially in brilliant characters. (One is distressed by perhaps the only example of real *caddishness* in this story—his forcing of Lady Castlemaine on his newly-married wife.) The story of Minette's death-bed is heart-rending: Louis in floods of tears: her husband demanding that a priest be sent for whose name "should look well in the Gazette," the cruelty of the Jansenist Canon Feuillet; the happy arrival of Bossuet at the very end. What heroism was possessed by the Stuart princess who has been basely represented as just a frivolous woman and a political *intriguante*!

*Sonnets and Verse*, by Hilaire Belloc, with an Introduction by Reginald Jebb (Duckworth 12s 6d).

IT IS FITTING that the most complete edition of Belloc's poetry should come from his old and faithful publishers and that there should be an Introduction by Mr. Reginald Jebb recalling vividly—and with information that will be new to many readers—Belloc the Man. Of all his writings it is the poems that bring one nearest to the personality of Belloc: his integrity, his effrontery, his charm. He burst upon Edwardian England as if a cross-legged knight in some Norman Sussex church had turned from stone to flesh in the middle of a service and demanded in a loud and terrible voice where was the Body of his Lord. There were many Catholics who found Belloc too fierce and intransigent; but it is consoling and perhaps significant that many more were the non-Catholics whom his poetry moved to sympathy and veneration.

*Cold War in Hell*, by Harry Blamires (Longmans 10s 6d).

THE AUTHOR, who has already recounted his expedition to purgatory, is now precipitated, in a rather less complimentary fashion, to the lower regions. His experience and its preliminaries, give him the opportunity of an intelligent satire on twentieth century irrationality which is the real point of the book, and well worth reading. The author's conception of hell underlines again that secret horror of mechanisation which lurks behind our modern pride in our techniques. But the supernatural framework of the story has neither the imaginative coherence of Kipling's fantasies on the same theme, nor the intellectual validity of those of C. S. Lewis. Devils may be within our reach for, as Chesterton says, being human we have all devils in our hearts; it is rather rash to speak for an angel. Yet it is refreshing to read a book which is not soft, and also avoids the dry hard cleverness of so much modern fiction.



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